

THE  
TRAVELS  
OF  
CYRUS.

To which is annexed,

A DISCOURSE  
UPON THE  
THEOLOGY AND MYTHOLOGY  
OF THE PAGANS.

BY THE CHEVALIER RAMSAY.

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THE  
TRAVELS  
OF  
CYRUS.  
SIXTH BOOK.

CYRUS no sooner arrived in Crete, but he went strait to Gnosſus, the capital of that ſland, famous for the wonderful labyrinth made by Dedalus, and the ſtately temple of Jupiter Olympius. This god was there repreſented without ears, to know that the ſovereign Lord of the univerſe has no need of bodily organs to hear the complaints and prayers of men (a). The temple ſtood within a large enclosure in the midſt of a ſacred wood; the entrance into it was through a portico of twenty

(a) Plut. of Iſis and Oſiris.

pillars of Oriental granate: the gate was of brass finely carved, and was adorned on the sides with two large figures, the one representing truth, the other justice. The fabric was an immense arch, which let in light only at the top, in order to hide from the eye all objects abroad except the heavens. The inside was a peristyle of porphyry and Numidian marble: at certain distances one from another were several altars consecrated to the celestial gods, with the statues of terrestrial divinities between the pillars; the dome was covered on the outside with plates of silver, and adorned on the inside with the images of heroes, who had been deified for their merit.

Cyrus entered this temple; the silence and majesty of the place filled him with awe and respect: he prostrated himself and adored the Divinity present; he had learned from Zoroaster that the Jupiter Olympius of the Greeks was the same with the Oromazes of the Persians, and the Osiris of the Egyptians. He then cast his eye over all the wonders of art which beautified this place; he was less struck with the richness and magnificence of the altars than with the nobleness and expression of the statues: as he had learned the Greek mythology, he could easily distinguish all the divinities, and

discern the mysteries couched in all the allegorical figures that were before him. What drew his attention more especially, was to see that each of the celestial deities held in his hand a golden tablet; upon these tablets were written the exalted ideas of Minos in religion, and the several answers which the oracles had given that law-giver, when he consulted them about the nature of the gods, and the worship they required.

Upon the tablet of Jupiter Olympius were to be read these words: 'I give being, life, and motion to all creatures (b); no one can know me but he who seeks to resemble me (c).' Upon that of Pallas: 'The gods make themselves known to the heart, and conceal themselves from those who endeavour to comprehend them by the understanding alone (d).' Upon that of the goddess Urania: 'The divine laws are not chains to fetter us, but wings to raise us to the bright Olympius (e).' Upon that of the Pythian Apollo was this ancient oracle: 'The gods take less delight to dwell in heaven than in the soul of the just, which is

(b) Ζῆνι δ' ἐν αὐτῷ θύηται, καὶ κινεῖται καὶ ἔσται.

Epimen.

See Hammond on Acts of Apost. chap. xvii. ver. 28.

(c) Plat. Epinom.

(d) Ibid.

(e) Plat. de Rep.

'their true temple (*f*). While Cyrus was meditating on the sublime sense of these inscriptions, a venerable old man entered the temple, prostrated himself before the statue of Harpocrates, and remained there along time in profound silence. Cyrus suspected it to be Pythagoras, but durst not interrupt his devotion. Pythagoras (for it was he) having paid his homage to the gods, rose up and perceived the two strangers; he imagined, that in the air and mein of Cyrus he saw the same marks which Solon had described, when he gave him notice of the young prince's intended voyage to Crete; he accosted him with a salutation, and made himself known.

The Samian sage, that he might not disturb the silence which ought to be observed in a place dedicated to the adoration of the immortal gods, led Cyrus and Araspes into the sacred wood adjoining to the temple. Cyrus then said to him: What I have seen upon the golden tablets gives me a high notion of your religion; I made haste to come hither, not only to be instructed in the laws of Minos, but to learn from you the doctrine of Orpheus about the golden age; I am told that it resembles that of the Persians concerning the empire of

(*f*) Herodotus, *eur. carm.*

Ormazdes, and that of the Egyptians relating to the reign of Osiris; it is a pleasure to see the traces of these great truths in all nations; I vouchsafe to unfold to me your ancient traditions. Solon, replied Pythagoras, acquainted me with your design of coming into this island; I was going to Croton, but I have put off my voyage to have the pleasure of seeing a hero, whose birth and conquests have been foretold by the oracles of almost all nations; I will conceal nothing from you of the mysteries of wisdom, because I know that you will one day be the law-giver of Asia as well as its conqueror. After this they sat down near a statue of Minos in the sacred wood, and the philosopher rehearsed to them all the mythology of the first Greeks, making use of the poetic stile of Orpheus, which by its paintings and images rendered sensible the sublimest truths.

(g) In the golden age the inhabitants of the earth lived in a perfect innocence: such as are the Elysian fields for heroes, such was then the happy abode of men; the intemperance of the earth, and the war of the elements were unknown; the North winds were not yet come forth from their deep grottos; the zephyrs only enlivened all things with their soft and gentle

(g) See the Disc.

breezes; neither the scorching heats of summer, nor the severities of winter were ever felt; the spring crowned with flowers, and the autumn loaded with fruits reigned together; death, diseases and crimes durst not approach these happy places. The soul was not then imprisoned in the body as it is now; it was united to a luminous, heavenly, ethereal body (*b*), which served it as a vehicle to fly through the air, rise to the stars, and wander over all the regions of immensity. Sometimes those first men reposing themselves in odoriferous groves, tasted all the purest pleasures of friendship; sometimes they sat at the tables of the gods, and were feasted with nectar and ambrosia; at other times Jupiter, attended by all the Divinities, mounted his winged chariot, and conducted them above the heavens. The poets have not celebrated, nor known that (*i*) HIGHEST PLACE; it was there that the souls beheld truth, justice and wisdom in their source; it was there that with the eyes of the pure spirit they contemplated the first Essence, of whose

(*b*) The Pythagoreans and Platonists, called this subtle vehicle of the soul,

*Σωμα αψυχιδις υγρον, αιθιρον.*

See Cudworth, p. 785. to p. 800.

(*i*) *Τοπος υπεργουτος.* See Disc.



brightness Jupiter and the other gods are but so many rays; there they were nourished with beholding that object, till being no longer able to support its splendor, they descended again to their ordinary abode. The deities at that time took a pleasure in conversing with men; the shepherdesses were loved by the gods, and the goddesses did not disdain the love of shepherds; the graces accompanied them every where, and these graces were the virtues themselves; but alas! this golden age was of no long duration.

One day men neglected to follow Jupiter's chariot, stayed in the fields of Hecate, got drunk with nectar, lost their taste for pure truth, and separated the love of pleasure from the love of order. The shepherdesses viewed themselves in fountains, and became idolaters of their own beauty; each had her thoughts wholly taken up about herself; Love forsook the earth, and together with him all the celestial divinities disappeared: the Sylvan gods were changed into Satyrs, the Napeæ into Bacchæ, and the Nymphs into Syrens; the virtues and the graces were no longer the same; and self-love, the parent of all vices, begot sensuality, the source of all miseries. Nature was quickly transformed in this lower sphere:

the sun had no longer the same force, nor the same mildness, its light was obscured; our globe fell to ruins, the abyfs was opened and overflowed; it was divided by seas into islands and continents; the fruitful hills became craggy rocks, and the delightful vallies frightful precipices: nothing remained but ruins of the old world drowned in the waters. The wings of the soul were clipt; its subtle vehicle was broken; and spirits were thrown down into mortal bodies, where they undergo divers transmigrations, till they are purged of their crimes by expiatory pains (!). The ethereal body was contracted, imprisoned, and buried in a living sepulchre, a coarse covering, which is ever changing, which does not continue one moment the same, and is something merely accidental to our substance: the immortal seed, the incorruptible body, the subtle vehicle is at present the seat of the soul, and the channel of communication between the pure spirit and the gross body, the hidden spring of all the motions and operations of our walking carcase. It was thus that the iron age succeeded to the golden, and it will last ten thousand years; during which time Saturn conceals himself in an inaccessible retreat; but in the end he will

(!) See the Disc.



resume the reins of empire, and restore the universe to its original splendor: all souls will then be re-united to their principle. This, continued Pythagoras, is the allegory by which Orpheus has made us understand the first condition of man, and the misery into which he is fallen. Our mortal body is the punishment of our crimes, and the disorder of our heart is an evident proof of our being degraded.

I perceive, said Cyrus, that the principles of Zoroaster, Hermes and Orpheus are the same: their allegories abound with the sublimest truth; why then will your priests reduce all to an outward worship? they have spoken to me of Jupiter only as of a law-giver, who promises his nectar and ambrosia, not to solid virtues, but to the belief of certain opinions and the observance of some ceremonies which are of no use either to enlighten the mind, or to purify the heart. The corruption and avarice of the priests, replied Pythagoras, is the source of all these mischiefs. The ministers of the gods, who were established at first to make men good, turn the priesthood into a vile trade; they mind only the outward shew of religion. The vulgar, not understanding the mysterious meaning of the sacred rites, fall into a gross superstition, while the bold wits give themselves up

to impiety. Some despise even the purest antiquity; others deny the necessity of an outward worship; and others arraign the eternal wisdom, because of the evils and crimes which happen here below. Anaximander and his audacious school actually spread abroad at this time throughout all Greece, that God and Nature are the same thing. Every one forms a system after his own fashion, without respecting the doctrine of the ancients.

When Cyrus heard him name Anaximander, he said to him, I have been informed of the cause of your disgrace and exile; and have a great desire to know the particulars of your dispute with that Milesian philosopher; tell me in what manner you combated this doctrine. It may help very much to preserve me from those dangerous maxims. I have already seen at Ecbatan several magi that talked the same language with Anaximander: the errors of the human mind are pretty near the same in all countries and in all times. The particulars of that dispute, answered Pythagoras, will be long, but I shall not affect to shorten them lest I should become obscure. Upon my return to Samos, continued the philosopher, after my long travels, I found that Anaximander, who was now advanced in years, had spread every

where his impious doctrine: The young people had embraced it; the love of novelty, the inclination to flatter their passions, the vanity of thinking themselves wiser than other men, had blinded their understandings, and drawn them into these errors. In order to remedy these mischiefs, I attacked the principles of the Milesian; he made me be cited before a tribunal of pontiffs in the temple of Apollo, where the king and all the people of the city were assembled; he began by representing my doctrine under the most odious form, he gave false and malicious turns to my words, and endeavoured to make me suspected of the impiety of which he himself was guilty: I then rose up and spoke in the following manner:

O king! image of the great Jupiter, priests of Apollo! and you citizens of Samos! hearken to me, and judge of my innocence; I have travelled among all the different nations of the universe to learn wisdom, which is only to be found in the tradition of the ancients: I have discovered, that from the origin of things men adored but one sole eternal principle; that all the gods of Greece are but different names to express the attributes of the Deity, or the properties of nature, which is the image of him. All that we can conceive of the supreme Es-

sence presents itself to the mind under the three forms of goodness, wisdom and power; the sovereign good, the principle of all beings, the intelligence, which designed the plan of the world, and the energy which executed it. The Orientals call these three forms (a) *Ormazdes*, *Mythra* and *Mythras*; the Egyptians *Osiris*, *Isis* and *Orus*; the Thracians *Uranus*, *Urania* and *Love*; the Tyrians *Belus*, *Venus* and *Thammuz*; the Greeks *Jupiter*, *Minerva* and *Apollo*. Sometimes we represent these three forms of the Divinity by the principal parts of nature, as the sun, the moon and the earth, and we call them *Phæbus*, *Phæbe* and *Pan*; at other times by the elements of fire, air and water, and we stile them *Vulcan*, *Juno*, and *Neptune*; one while by that prolific virtue which produces wine, corn and fruits, and they are called *Bacchus*, *Ceres* and *Vertumnus*; often by the justice they exercise in the infernal regions, and they bear the names of *Pluto*, *Proserpine* and *Minos*: Moreover, the first form of the Divinity is represented by his eternity, as he is the most ancient of all beings, and we call it *Cælus*, *Chronus* and *Saturn*: the second form by his fecundity, as containing the seeds of all things, and we stile it *Rhea*.

(b) See Disc.

*Vesta* and *Cybele*: the third form by the authority he exercises in the government of the world, and we call it *Mars*, as the arbiter of war, *Mercury* as the ambassador of the supreme God, *Hercules* as a hero who purges the earth of monsters. Thus we express the three attributes of the Deity which comprehend the totality of his nature by the original father, the author of all beings, the immortal virgin, the mother of nature, and the son of Jupiter, the emanation from these two principles. (b) All these names nevertheless denote but one and the same power which drew all beings, visible and invisible, out of nothing; but mankind have confounded the work with the artificer, the image with the original, the shadow with the substance: they have forgotten the ancient doctrine, they have lost the meaning of our allegories, and stopt at the outward symbols, without entering into the spirit of them: this is the source of those numberless errors which prevail at present throughout all Greece, degrade religion, and render it contemptible. Moreover, I find that it is a steadfast maxim in all nations, that men are not what they were in the golden age, that they are debased and degraded, and that religion is the only means

(a) See Disc.

to restore the soul to its original grandeur, to make her wings grow again, and to raise her to the ethereal regions from whence she is fallen. It is necessary first to become man by civil and social virtues, and then to resemble the gods by that love of the *Sovereign Beauty, Order and Perfection*, which makes us love virtue for itself: this is the only worship worthy of the Immortals, and this is all my doctrine.

Anaximander then rose up in the midst of the assembly; his age, talents and reputation, gained him a silent and universal attention. Pythagoras, said he, destroys religion by his refinements; his love of order is a chimera; let us consult nature, let us search into all the secret recesses of man's heart, let us interrogate men of all nations, we shall find that self-love is the source of all our actions, all our passions, and even all our virtues: Pythagoras loses himself in his abstract reasonings; I keep to simple nature, and there I find my principles: the feeling and sentiment of all hearts authorises my doctrine, and this kind of proof is the shortest and most convincing.

Anaximander, answered I, substitutes irregular passions in the room of noble sentiments; he always represents what men ordinarily do, as the standard of what they ought to do; but



The weakness of nature blinded and enfeebled by the passions, is not the rule of nature enlightened and fortified by the sovereign reason; he affirms boldly, but he proves nothing; this is not my method; my proofs are these, they seem to me clear and solid. The sovereign will of the great Jupiter ought to be the universal rule of our will; he loves all beings more or less, in proportion to their resemblance with him; it is the degree of this resemblance which constitutes the beauty, truth and goodness of each intelligence. The father of gods and men loves himself as the sovereign good, and all other beings as his emanations; and this should be our rule; self-love, to be regular, must be the effect and not the cause of our love for the supreme good; the love of the *Infinitely Great* should be the ground of our love for the *Infinitely Little*; the love of the original, the motive of our love for the pictures. This is the eternal law, the immutable order, and the love of the sovereign beauty.

Anaximander interrupted me with a disdainful smile, and answered; Pythagoras imposes upon you by words without meaning, by abstracted ideas that are of no use in social life, by chimeras hatched in the empty brain of idle sophists who exhaust themselves in vain

speculations; what is this eternal law? this order conformable to it? this love of the sovereign beauty with which he continually dazzles our eyes? let him explain himself clearly, and all his fine-spun notions will vanish into smoke.

(e) The law, replied I, is the intelligence which produced all things, the sovereign reason of the great Jupiter, the divine Minerva who incessantly springs from his head. The order conformable to this law is founded upon the different degrees of reality which the All-producing Spirit has given to his works, the immutable relations and essential differences which are between them. The love conformable to this order is to prefer that which is more perfect to that which is less so, not only in all kinds, but in the several species and individuals (d). Lastly, the sovereign beauty has no perfect similitude with any thing we behold on earth, or in the heavens; whatever else is beautiful, is only so by a participation of its beauty; all other beauties may increase, decay, change, or perish, but this is still the same in all times and in all places; it is by contemplating the different degrees of transi-

(e) See Hierocles on the golden verses of Pythag. p. 14.

(d) See Plat. fest. ed. Steph. p. 211.

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ent, variable and finite beauty, and by carrying our thoughts beyond them all, that we at length reach to that supreme beauty which is simple, pure, uniform, immutable, without colour, figure, or human qualities. Anaximander pretends this doctrine is a chimerical idea, and a vain refinement which has no influence in social life, but all the philosophers and legislators have thought otherwise; Hermes, Orpheus and Minos, laid it down as a fundamental principle, that a man must prefer the public good to his private interest from the sole love of goodness, justice and perfection: it was to this order that Codrus thought himself bound to sacrifice not only his crown but his life; his view in conforming to this order was not to render himself happy, on the contrary, he believed it his duty to devote himself to death, and to make no account of himself, because the love of order exacted it. If we can love nothing but with reference to ourselves, each member of society will come by degrees to consider himself as an independent being made for himself; there will be no reason to sacrifice private interest to public good; noble sentiments and heroic virtues will be destroyed: nor is this all, every concealed crime will soon be authoris'd; if virtue be not ami-

able for itself, each man will forsake it when he can hide himself from the eyes of the public, he will commit all crimes without remorse, when interest carries him to it, and he is not withheld by fear; and thus is also society dissolved; whether therefore you consider religion or policy, both conspire to prove my doctrine.

Here Anaximander answered: Pythagoras is unacquainted with the nature of the soul; the desire of happiness constitutes the essence of the will; pleasure is the great law both of mortal and immortal natures, its attractive force is irresistible, and it is the only moving spring of man's heart; the sight of perfection acts upon us only by the pleasing sensation it causes in us.

We always love with pleasure, answered I, but we do not always love for the sake of pleasure. As the delight which accompanies the perception of truth is not the reason why we acquiesce in truth, so the pleasure which accompanies the view of order is not the reason why we love justice. That which determines the pure act of the will, both in the one and the other case, is the perception of the immutable relations, and essential differences between beings; to know these relations, and these dif-

ferences, is Truth; to act according to these relations and differences, is virtue. We may follow justice for the good it procures us, but we cannot love it but for itself, that only, for the sake of which we love, being properly the object of our love (*e*). As the most unjust of all men would be he, who, while he committed all sorts of crimes, should pass for just, and so enjoy the honours of virtue and the pleasures of vice; so the perfectly just man would be he who should love justice for itself, and not for the honours and pleasures which accompany it; who should pass for unjust while he practised the most exact justice; who should not suffer himself to be moved by ignominy, distress, or the most cruel sufferings, but should continue steadfast in the love of justice, not because it is delightful, but because it is just. It is thus that the gods do good from the pure love of good; the soul is an image of their substance, consequently she may imitate them, and love virtue for itself; the perception of truth may act as strongly upon her as the sensation of pleasure.

Ever since the iron age began, men are so blinded, that they do not comprehend this

(*e*) See Plat. Rep. lib. 2. p. 36.

sublime love of virtue; the philosophers themselves arrive to it but by slow degrees; wisdom, in purifying the heart, accommodates herself to the weakness of our distempered and imperfect nature (*f*). The divine Themis inebriates us at first with heavenly delights to counterbalance in us the weight of terrestrial pleasures. She allures us by a sweet smile, enchants us by her looks all charming, transports us by the amiable truths she presents to the mind; we adhere to virtue for the sake of those sweets that accompany it: but in proportion as the soul withdraws from outward objects, her love becomes more exalted, more delicate and more generous; she enters deeply into herself, concentrates all her powers, and retires into her spiritual nature; she sees all the windings and turnings of the heart, she discovers all the enormities of her self-love, which made her refer all her virtues to herself, and practise them only out of vanity, that she might become the idol of men by an usurpation upon the rights of the gods; she suffers inexpressible pains to expiate these secret iniquities; she at length gets out of herself, rises above herself,

(*f*) See Plotinus, Pselus, Jamblichus, Porphyry, and the Platonists of the third century, when they speak of the purification of the soul,

separates and disengages herself from every thing, that she may be united to the immutable Beauty, and behold him with that eye with which alone he can be seen; then it is that she brings forth not the shadows of virtue, but the virtues themselves, she becomes immortal, and the friend of God (g). Such is the immutable law of Themis, the human virtues are acquired with pleasure, but deification only by sufferings, and by being stript of every thing that is mortal and terrestrial in us. It was thus that Hercules found exquisite pleasures in his twelve labours, and in all the exploits of an heroic virtue; but he was not deified till he had passed through the purifying flames of Themis, which your poets have represented by those of his funeral pile on mount Oeta. They consumed the poisoned robe of the Centaur, of the monster Typhon, and of the evil principle, which that son of Jupiter had put on, to give us an example of perfect virtue; in the midst of the devouring flames he rejoiced at the destruction of all that he had received from his mother Alcmena; the sight of the immutable order so ravished and transported him out of himself, that he could not give a thought to his own happiness.

(g) Plato's feast, p. 212.

Here Anaximander cried out with fury, Pythagoras is ignorant of the history of the gods, he says we must resemble them; they swim in delights above, and descend upon earth only to please themselves, with the terrestrial goddesses; Jupiter himself is an instance of it; to imitate them is to pursue pleasure; Pythagoras artfully endeavours to create in you a brutal indifference for the feast of the gods, make you despise Nectar and Ambrosia, and destroy in you the invincible desire of happiness natural to all intelligences; I give you warning of the horrible consequences of his system, beware of his sophistry.

(b) Justice, replied I with an intrepid air, is amiable for itself; if we love it only for the advantages it procures us, we are not good, but politic; it is the highest injustice to love justice only for the sake of reward; to aspire to the table of the gods merely to please and delight ourselves, is not to love the sovereign good, it is to degrade it and make it subservient to our interest. It was thus that souls fell from the sublime place in heaven, they loved nectar and ambrosia more than truth, and separated the love of pleasure from the love of order. To love the sovereign *Beauty* only as

(b) See the Disc.



beneficent, is to love him for the finite participation of his gifts; it is to love him for what he does in us, and not for what he is in himself; it is to separate the sovereign goodness from the supreme justice; to love the immutable *Beauty* for his perfection, is to love him for his immense totality; it is to love him for what we know of him, and not for what we feel of him; it is to love without measure the Being without limits; and it is this love which dilates, elevates, deifies, and gives a kind of immensity to the soul. I maintain therefore with all the ancients, that we are not to desire admittance to the table of the gods, but as a state in which we are united to the sovereign *Beauty*, transformed into his image, and perfected in his love. Is Olympus less the object of our desire, because we desire it from a motive worthy of the gods? do we love the gods the less, because we prefer their friendship to the nectar that is drunk at the table?

O Samians! Anaximander endeavours not only to cloud your minds, but to corrupt your manners; he deceives you by sticking to the literal sense of your mythology. The gods, who are exempt from human frailties, do not descend upon earth to satisfy any passions; all that wise antiquity tells us of the amours of

Jupiter and the other divinities, are but an ingenious allegory to represent the pure communications of the gods with mortals since the iron age. Your philosophers always describe virtue to us as a divine energy descending from heaven, they continually speak of guardian deities, who inspire, enlighten and strengthen us, to shew that heroic virtues can proceed from the gods alone; but those poets who seek only to please, and to strike the imagination, by heaping wonders upon wonders, have disfigured your mythology by their fictions.

Here Anaximander cried out again with an air of zeal and enthusiasm; Will you suffer, O Samians, your religion to be thus destroyed, by turning its mysteries into allegories, blaspheming against the sacred books of your poets, and denying the most undoubted facts of tradition? Pythagoras overthrows your altars, your temples, and your priesthood, that he may lead you to impiety, under pretence of destroying superstition. A confused murmur immediately arose in the assembly; they were divided in their sentiments; the greatest part of the priests called me impious, and an enemy of religion. Perceiving then the deep dissimulation of Anaximander, and the blind zeal of the people who were deluded by sophistry, it was



impossible for me to contain myself, and raising my voice, I said :

O King, priests and Samians, hearken to me for the last time. I would not at first lay open the mysteries of Anaximander's monstrous system, nor endeavour in a public assembly to render his person odious as he has laboured to do mine ; hitherto I have respected his gray hairs, but now that I see the pit of destruction into which he seeks to hurry you, I can no longer be silent without being false to the gods and to my country. Anaximander seems to you to be zealous for religion, but in reality he endeavours to destroy it. Hear what his principles are, which he teaches in secret to those who will listen to him. There is nothing in the universe but matter and motion ; in the fruitful bosom of an infinite matter every thing is produced by an eternal revolution of forms ; the destruction of some is the birth of others ; the different ranging of the atoms is what alone makes the different sorts of minds, but all is dissipated and plunged again into the same abyss after death. According to Anaximander, that which is now stone, wood, metal, may be dissolved and transformed not only into water, air and pure flame, but into rational spirit ; according to him, our own idle fears

have dug the infernal pit, and our own scared imagination is the source of those famous rivers which flow in gloomy Tartarus; our superstition has peopled the celestial regions with gods and demi-gods, and it is our vanity which makes us imagine that we shall one day drink nectar with them; according to him goodness and malice, virtue and vice, justice and injustice, are but names which we give to things as they please or displease us; men are born vicious or virtuous, as tygers are born fierce, and lambs mild; all is the effect of an invincible fatality, and we think that we chuse only because the sweetness of pleasure hides the force which irresistibly draws us. This, O Samians, is the dreadful precipice to which he would lead you.

While I was speaking, the gods declared themselves. Before the dispute the high-priest of Delphos had been consulted about my doctrine; his decisions are always agreeable to the will of the great Apollo; the answer he sent to the priests of Samos was this: ‘ You  
‘ accuse Pythagoras of erring through an excess of love for the supreme Beauty, and I  
‘ accuse you of erring through a want of friendship for your fellow citizen; the God whom  
‘ I serve equally abhors those who aspire not

to the pleasures of Olympus, and those who desire them only to gratify their passions; mortals have often need to think of nectar and ambrosia, in order to reject the enchanting cup of Circe, which transforms men into hogs; but when the goddess Minerva descends into heroes, they perform noble actions from noble motives; pure pleasures accompany them, glory environs them, immortality follows them, but virtue is alone their object.' Scarce had they read this answer of the pontif, when a divine voice seemed to come from the innermost part of the temple, and to say, '(i) The gods do good for the sole love of good, you cannot honour them worthily but by resembling them.' The priests and the multitude, who were more struck with the prodigy than they had been with the truth, changed their sentiments, and declared in my favour. Anaximander perceived it, and imagining that I had corrupted the pontifs in order to delude the people, hid himself under a new kind of hypocrisy, and said to the assembly, 'The oracle has spoken, and I must be silent: I believe, but I am not yet enlightened; my heart is touched, but my understanding is not convinced; I desire to discourse with Pytha-

(i) See Hier. Aur. Carm.

goras in private, and to be instructed by his reasonings. Being moved and softened with Anaximander's seeming sincerity, I embraced him with tears of joy in the presence of the king and the pontiffs, and conducted him to my own house. The impious wretch, imagining that it was impossible for a man of sense not to think as he did, believed that I affected this zeal for religion only to throw a mist before the eyes of the people and gain their suffrages. We were no sooner alone than he changed his stile and said to me:

○ The dispute between us is reduced to this question; Whether the eternal nature acts with wisdom or design, or takes all sorts of forms by a blind necessity? let us not dazzle our eyes with vulgar prejudices; a philosopher cannot believe but when he is forced to it by a complete evidence; I reason only upon what I see, and I see nothing in all nature but an immense matter and an infinite activity; this active matter is eternal: now an infinite active force must, in an eternal duration, of necessity give all sorts of forms to an immense matter; it has had other forms than what we see at present, and it will take new ones; every thing has changed, and does change, and will change, and this is sufficient for the production not only of this

world, but of numberless worlds invifible to us.

What you offer, replied I, is nothing but sophiftry inftead of proof. You fee nothing in all nature, fay you, but an infinite activity and an immense matter; I allow it; but does it follow from thence, that the infinite activity is a property of matter? matter is eternal (add you) and it may be fo, becaufe the infinite force which is always acting may have always produced it; but do you conclude from thence that it is the only exifting fubftance? I fhall agree alfo that an all-powerful, active force may in an eternal duration give all forts of forms to an immense matter; but is this a proof that that force acts by a blind neceffity and without defign? though I fhould admit your principles, I muft deny your confequences, which feem to me abfolutely falfe. My reasons are thefe:

The idea which we have of matter does not include that of active force; matter does not ceafe to be matter when in perfect reft: it cannot reftore motion to itfelf when it has loft it; from whence I conclude that it is not active of itfelf, and confequently that infinite force is not one of its properties. Further, I perceive in myfelf and in feveral beings with which I am encompaffed, a reasoning principle which feels,

thinks, compares, and judges: Motion only changes the situation or figure of bodies; now it is absurd to suppose that matter without thought and sensation can become sensible and intelligent merely by shifting its place, or changing its figure; there is no connexion between these ideas; I allow that the quickness of our sensations depends often upon the motion of the humours in the body, and this proves that spirit and body may be united, but by no means that they are the same; and from the whole I conclude, that there is in nature another substance besides matter, and consequently that there may be a sovereign intellect much superior to mine, to yours, and to those of all other men. In order to know whether there be such an intellect, I sally out of myself, I run over all the wonders of the universe, I observe the constancy and regularity of its laws, the fruitfulness and variety of its productions, the connexion and suitableness of its parts, the conformation of animals, the structure of plants, the order of the elements, and the revolutions of the heavenly bodies: I cannot doubt but that all is the effect of art, contrivance and a supreme wisdom. I then draw a veil over all the beings with which I am encompassed; I consider them only as phantoms, mere appear-



ances and illusions; I shut my eyes, I stop my ears, I return again into myself, to consider that reasoning principle which I have already proved not to be material, which might subsist though all bodies were annihilated, and which shows me all objects without presenting itself to my view. Since there cannot be an eternal succession of effects without a cause, it follows necessarily that he who made this intelligent principle must be himself intelligent; hence I conclude that the *Infinite Force* which you acknowledge to be in nature is a *Sovereign Intelligence*. When I thus return into myself, I again perceive the great Jupiter whom you would hide from my eyes; I find myself at present alone with him, he is sufficient to me, he continually acts upon me, he is the cause of all my sensations and of all my thoughts; he can represent numberless worlds to me, though there were nothing in all nature but he and I. Earth, air and heaven, planets and stars, universal nature, I behold you no more; vain shadows, imperfect images, disfigured pictures, you are vanished away, I perceive nothing but your original and your cause, I am swallowed up, I lose myself in his bosom, and I need only feel my own being to be convinced of his.

I remember, says Cyrus, that Zoroaster laid

open to me all these truths: a superficial view of the wonders of the universe might leave the mind in some uncertainty, but when we descend to particulars, when we enter into the sanctuary of nature, and study its secrets, laws and effects to the bottom, when we are well acquainted with ourselves, and compare what we feel within us with what we see without us, it is impossible any longer to hesitate; I do not see how Anaximander could resist the force of your arguments.

He answered me, Your reasoning is plausible, but has no solidity in it; you always shun the main question by the dextrous agility of your mind. I agree with you, that there cannot be an eternal succession of effects without a (*k*) first cause; this would be an infinite chain hanging upon nothing, an immense weight without a support; I likewise allow that the idea of matter does not include that of active force, as the idea of active force does not include that of wisdom; because the different attributes of one and the same essence may be separately conceived. Lastly, I grant that bo-

(*k*) Spinoza never supposed an eternal succession of second causes without a first. He confutes that opinion by Mr Woolaston's argument, which is the same that Anaximander uses here. See Spin. Epist. 29.



ies do not become intelligent by changing of place and figure; but you ascribe to matter properties which it has not: matter and extension are the same thing; (*l*) now you know that extension has neither colour, nor smell, nor taste; and I add, that it has neither fixed bounds, nor distinct parts, nor real motions: all these qualities are but ideas (*m*), or perceptions of the soul, caused by the action of the immense (*n*) extension, which shews itself successively to us under different forms: this principle being laid down, my real doctrine is this. We cannot banish from our minds the ideas of eternity, immensity and infinity, they every where present themselves to us; we can explain nothing without them; these three properties are therefore the attributes of some eternal, immense and (*o*) absolutely infinite being; there can be no other (*p*) substance but his, it is one and it is all; it is the universal being, and it is both (*q*) extended and intellectual;

(*l*) Descartes. (*m*) Dr Berkley. (*n*) F. Malebranche.  
(*o*) Spinoza says expressly the same things, Deus est ens absolute infinitum, (*p*) Praeter Deum nulla dari neque concipi potest substantia. (*q*) Cogitatio est attributum Dei, sive Deus est res cogitans. Extensio est attributum Dei, sive Deus est res extensa Substantia cogitans et substantia extensa unaqueque est substantia, quae jam sub hoc jam sub illo attributo concipitur.

what makes the (*r*) diversity of beings is not any real distinction of substance, but the difference of form; the (*f*) eternal nature acts continually within itself, by itself, and upon itself, according to the whole extent of its infinite power, and thereby necessarily produces all sorts of forms; this boundless (*z*) power is not restrained by those rules which are called wisdom, goodness and justice, for these belong to finite beings, and by no means to the infinite. Let me see you attack this system with solid reasons, without seeking to dazzle my eyes with metaphors, allegories and the loose declamations of an orator.

I answered; If you only maintained, that all essences are but different forms of the divine essence, that our souls are portions of the soul of the world, and our bodies part of his immense extension, you would not be an atheist, but you would hold absurdities with many other (*a*)

(*r*) *Res particulares nihil sunt nisi Dei attributorum modi.*

(*f*) *Ex necessitate naturae divinae infinita infinitis modis sequi debent. Deus est omnium rerum causa immanens non vero transitus.*

(*z*) *Intellectus, voluntas, amor ad modos Dei five entium particularia pertinent, non ad substantiam aeternam et infinitam. Vid. Spin. Eth. Part 1. Def. 6. Prop. 8, 13, 14, 18, 25, 31, & Part 2. Prop. 1, 2, 7, 10. & Scholia.*

(*a*) It was the opinion of the Stoics, of some of the disciples of Orpheus, and of the ancient Pantheists, and is held by some of the modern Chinese, See Disc.

philosophers who have a sincere abhorrence of all impiety. They suppose as you do that there is in all nature but one substance, that the whole universe is an emanation from the divine essence, or an expansion of it; but they believe that there is an infinite spirit who presides over all spirits, a sovereign wisdom that governs the world, a supreme goodness that loves all its productions; they never imagined as you do, that the one only substance acts without intelligence or justice, without knowing or having any regard to the immutable relations and essential differences between beings; your atheism lies there: and what proof do you offer for your opinion? in order to demonstrate and convince, is it enough to heap proposition upon proposition, take for granted, and affirm boldly?

He replied with an haughty assurance, My whole system turns upon this single (b) principle, that there is but one only substance in nature; this being demonstrated, all the rest follows by necessary and unavoidable consequence. Now this great principle I prove thus; When

(b) All Spinoza's book, his definitions, axioms, propositions, corollaries and scholia tend to prove this principle, or flow from it; this once destroyed, all this system falls to the ground.

the Eternal Being produces new substances, he gives them something or nothing; if he gives them nothing, he will never produce any thing, if he gives them a part of his own essence, he does not produce a new substance, but a new form; this is demonstration: provided the unity of substance be not destroyed, it is indifferent to me how it is called, whether soul or body, spirit or matter, intelligent or intelligible extension. (c)

When the great Jupiter, said I, creates, he does not draw a being out of nothing, as out of a subject which contains in it some reality, neither does he divide his essence to make a se-

(c) This is the use which the Spinozists have made of the systems maintained by Descartes, Malebranche, and Dr Berkeley, contrary to the intention of those three philosophers. The first says, that matter and extension are the same thing; the second affirms, that the immediate object of our sensations is an intelligible, eternal, immutable, infinite extension; the third endeavours to prove, that there is no such thing as body, that all is spirit. Malebranche thinks that Descartes does not extend his principle far enough; and Berkeley accuses Malebranche of stopping too soon: the Spinozists pretend to reconcile all three by admitting but one only substance: it must nevertheless be allowed that there is an essential difference between these three philosophers and Spinoza, since they teach that there is a real distinction between the infinite essence and created essence.

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parate substance of it, but he makes something exist which did not exist before: now to make a substance exist which was not before, has nothing in it more inconceiveable than to make a form exist which was not before; since in both cases there is a new reality produced, and whatever difficulties there are in conceiving the passage from non-existence to being, they are as puzzling in the one as in the other: you cannot deny a creating (*d*) energy without denying for the same reason all active force. Thus your eternal nature is reduced to a formless mass, or to an infinite space without action and power, as well as without wisdom and goodness. Where will you find an active Deity to reduce that chaos to order, or to fill that immense space: but I will restore you, out of compassion, that active principle and that moving force, which you have need of to form your world; I will suppose, contrary to all reason and evidence, that your Eternal Nature acts as necessarily as it exists, you will gain nothing by this concession, you will only plunge yourself into a new abyss of contradictions more absurd and more frightful than the first. You cannot deny that there are in nature beings

(*d*) Plato calls it ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚὴ ΔΥΝΑΜΙς. See Disc.

who suffer, and others that do not suffer, intelligences that are ignorant, and others who have knowledge; some who deny, others who affirm, and others who doubt of the same things; intelligences who love and hate the same objects and who often change their thoughts, sentiments and passions: now, is it conceivable that the same immutable, immense, infinite substance should be at the same time knowing and ignorant, happy and unhappy, a friend and an enemy of its own nature? Does this monstrous assemblage of variable, bounded, fantastical and jarring forms square with the attributes you ascribe to the eternal nature? You may weaken your understanding by too much refining, you may exhaust yourself by spinning a thin web of sophisms, you may wrap yourself up in these cob-webs, and endeavour to entangle light fluttering minds in them; but I defy you to consider attentively the consequences of your system without horror and shame; what motive is it that could induce you to prefer the system of a blind nature to that of a wise intelligence? Do but ascend to first principles, make use of that accuracy in which you formerly excelled, and you will find that the infinite being, which you admit equally with me, is not universal being, but a being



vastly distinct from all others; that he has produced new substances as well as new forms; that he knows himself and all his productions; that he loves himself essentially, and all other beings in proportion to the degrees of reality he has communicated to them; that he is by consequence supremely powerful, wise and good; that it is absurd to conceive what is only power, wisdom and goodness, under the form of length, breadth and thickness; that he may exist every where without extension of parts, as he knows every thing without succession of thoughts; that infinite extension is not his immensity, as infinite time is not his eternity; that space is only the manner in which bodies exist in him, as time is only the manner in which created beings exist with him; and lastly, that variable and finite beings are not different forms of his substance, but free effects of his power. Examine geometrically this chain of consequences drawn from the idea of the eternal, immense infinite being; descend from the first to the last, remount from the last to the first, and you will see that they are all of them necessarily linked together; every step you take you will discern new rays of light, which, when they are all united, form a com-

plete evidence: I challenge you to shew me where it fails.

Thrice he assayed to speak, and thrice his perplexed mind endeavoured in vain to rally its confused ideas; at length he collected all the powers of his understanding, and answered me thus: The universe is full of defects and vices, I see every where beings that are unhappy, and wicked; now I cannot conceive how sufferings and crimes can begin or subsist under the empire of a being supremely good, wise and powerful: if he be wise, he must have foreseen them; if he be powerful, he might have hindred them; and if he be good, he would have prevented them. Here is therefore as manifest a contradiction in your system as in mine; you must deny that there are crimes and miseries in the universe, or that there is a sovereign wisdom and goodness that governs it; take your choice.

How, answered I, will you deny what you see clearly because you do not see further? The smallest light induces us to believe, but the greatest obscurity is not a sufficient reason for denying: in this dawn of human life the lights of the understanding are too faint to shew us truth with a perfect evidence: we only get a glimpse of it by a chance ray, which suffices to

conduct us; but it is not such a broad day-light as dispels all obscurity. You deny a creating power because you do not conceive how it operates; you reject an eternal wisdom because you know not the secret reasons of its conduct: you refuse to acknowledge a sovereign goodness because you do not comprehend how evil can subsist under its government. O Anaximander! is this reasoning? A thing is not because you do not see it? All your difficulties are reduced to this.

You do me injustice, replied the wretched old man, who began to waver and to change his style, I neither affirm nor deny any thing, but I doubt of every thing, because I see nothing certain, nothing but what is wrapt up in darkness; and this obscurity reduces me to the necessity of fluctuating for ever in a sea of uncertainties; there is no such thing as demonstration (a). It does not follow that a thing is true because it appears so; a mind which is deceived often, may be deceived always; and this possibility is alone sufficient to make me doubt of every thing.

Such is the nature of our understanding, replied I, that we cannot refuse to do homage

(a) See Disc,

to truth when it is clearly discerned, we are forced to acquiesce, we are no longer free to doubt: now this impossibility of doubting is what men call conviction, evidence, demonstration: the mind of man can go no farther. This light strikes with equal force upon all minds, it has an irresistible power over Scythians and Indians, Greeks and Barbarians, gods and men; and it can therefore be nothing else but a ray of that eternal wisdom which enlightens all intelligences. This light is the last tribunal for trying our ideas, we cannot appeal from it without ceasing to be reasonable. To doubt contrary to all reason is extravagance; to pretend to doubt when the evidence makes doubting impossible, is adding insincerity to folly. See to what a dilemma you are reduced by too much refining; observe the inconstancy of your mind, and the inconsistency of your reasoning; you were at first for demonstrating that there is no sovereign intelligence; when I shewed you that your pretended demonstrations were only looking suppositions, you then took refuge in a general doubting; and now at last your philosophy terminates in destroying reason, rejecting all evidence, and maintaining that there is no rule whereby to make any settled judgments: it is

no purpose therefore to reason longer with

Here I left off speaking, that I might listen to what he would answer, but finding that he did not open his mouth, I imagined that he began to be moved, and I continued thus: I suppose that you doubt seriously, but is it want of light, or the fear of being convinced, which causes your doubts? Enter into yourself; truth is better felt than understood: hearken to the voice of nature that speaks within you, she will soon rise up against all your refined sophistry; your heart, which is born with an insatiable thirst of happiness, will give your understanding the lie, when it rejoices in the unnatural hope of its approaching extinction; once again, I say, enter into yourself, impose a silence upon your imagination, let not your passions blind you, and you will find in the inmost of your soul an inexpressible feeling of the divinity which will dispel your doubts: it is by hearkening to this internal evidence that your understanding and your heart will be reconciled; in their reconciliation depends the peace of the soul, and it is in this tranquillity alone that we can hear the voice of wisdom, which supplies the defects of our reasonings. O my father, my dear father, where are you? I seek you in

yourself without finding you. What is become of that divine man who formerly carried me through all the regions of immensity, who taught me to run back through all times to eternity itself? What then is become of that sublime, subtle and extensive understanding? What cloud of passions has obscured it? What midnight of prejudice is cast over it? Here I fixed my eyes upon him, to see whether my arguments or sentiments had made any impression on his mind, but he looked upon me with the disdainful smile of a haughty soul that hides her weakness and despair under an air of contempt. I then held my peace, and invoked the heavenly Minerva in a profound silence. I prayed to her to enlighten him, but she was deaf to me, because he was deaf to her; he saw not the truth, because he loved it not.

Here Pythagoras ceased, and Cyrus said to him: you join the most affecting considerations with the most solid arguments; whether we consult the idea of the first cause, or the nature of its effects, the happiness of man or the good of society, reason or experience, all conspire to prove your system; but to believe that of Anaximander, we must take for granted what can never with the least reason be imagined, that motion is an essential property of



matter, that matter is the only existing substance, and that the infinite force acts without knowledge or design, notwithstanding all the marks of wisdom that shine throughout the universe. I do not conceive how men can hesitate between the two systems; the one is odious to the understanding, denies all consolation to the heart, and is destructive of society; the other is full of light and of comfortable ideas, produces noble sentiments, and confirms us in all the duties of civil life. One of the two systems must be true; the Eternal Being is either blind nature, or a wise intelligence; there is no medium; you have shewn that the first opinion is false and absurd, the other therefore is evidently true and solid. Your arguments have darted a pure light into the inmost of my soul; you seem nevertheless to have left your adversary's objection concerning the origin of evil in its full strength; help me to answer this grand difficulty. Here Pythagoras runs through all the different opinions of the philosophers, without being able to satisfy Cyrus; the prince found a solution of this difficulty no where but among the Hebrews; but though he was not content with the answers of the Samian on this head, he would not make them feel the weakness of them, nor let him per-

ceive that he himself was sensible of it; he dexterously shifted the question, and returning to his dispute, Make haste to tell me, said he, O wise Pythagoras! what impression your discourse made upon Anaximander.

He withdrew, answered the philosopher, in confusion and despair, and with a resolution to ruin me. As weak eyes, which the sun dazzles and blinds, such was the heart of Anaximander: neither prodigies, nor proofs, nor touching considerations can move the soul, when error has seized upon the understanding by the corruption of the heart. Since my departure from Samos, I hear that he is fallen into the wild extravagance which I had foreseen: being resolved to believe nothing which could not be demonstrated with geometrical evidence, he is come not only to doubt of the most certain truths, but to believe the greatest absurdities. He maintains, without any allegory, that all he sees is but a dream; that all the men who are about him are phantoms; that it is he himself who speaks to and answers himself, when he converses with them; that the heaven and the earth, the stars and the elements, plants and trees, are only illusions: and in a word, that there is nothing real but himself: at first he was for destroying the divine essence to sub-

to attribute a blind nature in its place; at present he has destroyed that nature itself, and maintains that he is the only existent being (a). Thus ended the conversation between Cyrus and Pythagoras. The prince was touched with the consideration of the weakness of human understanding; he saw by the example of Anaximander, that the most subtile geniuses may go gradually from impiety to extravagance, and fall into a philosophical delirium, which is as real a madness as any other. Cyrus went the next day to see the sage, in order to put some questions to him about the laws of Minos.

The profound peace, said he to Pythagoras, which is at present in Persia, gives me leisure to travel; I am going over the most famous countries to collect useful knowledge; I have been in Egypt where I have informed myself of the laws and government of that kingdom; I have travelled over Greece to acquaint myself with the different republics which compose it, especially those of Lacedæmon and Athens. The antient laws of Egypt seem to me to have been excellent and founded in nature, but its form of government was defective; the kings had no bridle to restrain them; the thirty judges did not share the supreme authority.

(a) The language of the modern Egomists and of Carcasses heretofore. See Disc.

with them; they were but the interpreters of the law. Despotic power and conquests at last destroyed that empire. I fear that Athens will be ruined by a contrary fault; its government is too popular and tumultuous; the laws of Solon are good, but he had not sufficient authority to reform the genius of a people that have an unbounded inclination for liberty, luxury and pleasure. Lycurgus has provided a remedy for the defects which ruined Egypt and will destroy Athens; but his laws are too contrary to nature: equality of ranks and community of goods cannot subsist long; as soon as the Lacedæmonians shall have extended their dominion in Greece, they will doubtless throw off the yoke of these laws; they restrain the passions on one side but indulge them too much on another, and while they proscribe sensuality they favour ambition. None of these three forms of government seem to me to be perfect; I have been told that Minos heretofore established one in this island, which was free from the defects I have mentioned.

Pythagoras admired the young prince's penetration, and conducted him to the temple where the laws of Minos were kept in a gold box; they contained all that regarded religion, morality and policy, and whatever might contribute to the knowledge of the gods, our

lives and other men; Cyrus found in this famous book all that was excellent in the laws of Egypt, Sparta and Athens, and thereby perceived, that as Minos had borrowed from the Egyptians, so Lycurgus and Solon were indebted to the Cretan law-giver for the most valuable parts of their institutions; and it was upon this model also that Cyrus formed those admirable laws which he established in his empire after he had conquered Asia.

Pythagoras after this explained to him the form of government of antient Crete; and how it was provided equally against despotic power and anarchy. One would think, added the philosopher, that a government so perfect in all its parts should have subsisted for ever, but there hardly remain any traces of it. The successors of Minos degenerated by degrees; they did not think themselves great enough while they were only guardians of the laws; they would substitute their arbitrary will in the place of them. The Cretans opposed the innovation; from thence sprang discords and civil wars; in these tumults the kings were dethroned, exiled, or put to death, and usurpers took their place; these usurpers to flatter the people weakened the authority of the nobles; the Comes deputies of the people invaded the sovereign

authority; the monarchy at first shaken and then despised was at last abolished, and the government became popular. Such is the sad condition of human things. The desire of unbounded authority in princes, and the love of independence in the people, expose all kingdoms to inevitable revolutions; nothing is fixed or stable among men. Cyrus perceived by this, that the safety and happiness of a kingdom do not depend so much upon the wisdom of laws as upon that of kings. All sorts of government are good when those who govern seek only the public welfare, but they are all defective; because the governors being but men are imperfect.

After several such conversations with the wise Samian, the prince prepared to continue his travels, and at parting said to him, I am extremely concerned to see you abandoned to the cruelty of capricious fortune! how happy should I be to spend my life with you in Persia! I will not offer you pleasures or riches which allure other men; I know you would be little moved by them; you are above the favours of kings, because you see the vanity of human grandeur, but I offer you in my dominions peace, liberty, and the sweet leisure which the gods grant to all those who love wis-



dom. I should have a sincere joy, replied Pythagoras, to live under your protection with Zoroaster and the Magi, but I must follow the orders given me by the oracle of Apollo: a mighty empire is rising in Italy, which will one day become master of the world; its form of government is like that established in Crete by Minos; the genius of the people is as warlike as that of the Spartans; the generous love of their country, the esteem of personal poverty in order to augment the public treasure, the noble and disinterested sentiments which prevail among the citizens, their contempt of pleasure, and their ardent zeal for liberty, render them fit to conquer the whole world; I am to introduce there the knowledge of the gods and of laws. I must leave you, but I will never forget you; my heart will follow you everywhere; you will doubtless extend your conquests as the oracles have foretold: may the gods preserve you then from being intoxicated by sovereign authority! may you long feel the pleasure of reigning only to make other men happy! fame will inform me of your successes: I shall often ask, Has not grandeur made a change in the heart of Cyrus? Does he still love virtue? Does he continue to fear the gods? Though we now part we shall meet again in

the abode of the just; I shall doubtless descend thither before you; I will there expect your manes. Ah Cyrus! how joyful shall I be to see you again after death among the good kings, who are crowned by the gods with an immortal glory! farewell, prince, farewell, and remember that you never employ your power but to execute the dictates of your goodness.

Cyrus was so much affected, that he could not answer; he respectfully embraced the old man, and bedewed his face with tears: but in short they must separate: Pythagoras embarked very soon for Italy, and the prince in a Phœnician vessel for Tyre. As Cyrus was sailing from Crete, and the coasts of Greece began to disappear, he felt an inward regret, and calling to mind all he had seen, said to Araspes, What! is this the nation that was represented to me as so superficial and trifling? I have found there great men of all kinds, profound philosophers, able captains and wise politicians, and geniuses capable of reaching to the heights, and of going to the bottom of things. Other nations methinks do not do the Greek justice.

I cannot admire, answered Araspes, either their talents or their sciences; the Chaldeans and Egyptians surpass them exceedingly in

solid knowledge. Lycurgus, Solon, Thales, and Pythagoras would never have known any thing, if they had not travelled in Egypt and the East: all that they have added to our philosophy has been only so much allay to it. The doctrine of (b) Thales is a series of loose suppositions; his ethereal fluid is a mere whim and not at all geometrical; what comparison between his philosophy and that of (c) Moschus the Phœnician? Besides I do not find any thing of the original, creating, masculine genius in the Greek poets and orators, but a diffusèd style, superfluous flowers, ideas that seem clear and transparent only because they are light and thin; their pretty thoughts, ingenious turns and pretended delicacies proceed wholly from the infant weakness of their understanding, which cannot rise to the sublime, and continually hovers about the surface of ob-

(b) He introduced mathematics and physics into Greece, Descartes revived the taste of them in Europe.

(c) He was the first that taught the atomical doctrine, not in the sense of Democritus and Epicurus, but in that of Isaac Newton. See Opt. pag. 407. Moschus and the Phœnicians believed, that after the chaos the plastic spirit of the universe had brought the atoms together by love,

Ἡμετέριον τὸ πρῶτον τῶν ἰδίων ἀρχῶν.

This is the manner in which the ancients expressed the doctrine of attraction.

jects: in a word, all that I admire in the Greeks is their politeness, their conversible qualities, their taste for pleasure, and their continual joy; they purchase happiness at a cheaper rate than other nations.

It is true, replied Cyrus, we find sublime ideas and useful discoveries among the Chaldeans and Egyptians, but their depth of science is often full of obscurity; they know not like the Greeks how to come at hidden truths by a chain of known and easy ones: that ingenious method of ranging each idea in its proper place, of leading the mind by degrees from the most simple truths to the most compounded, with order, perspicuity and accuracy, is a secret with which the Chaldeans and Egyptians, who boast of having more of original genius are little acquainted. This nevertheless is the true science by which man is taught the extent and bounds of his own mind, and this is what we owe to Thales: his works and his travels spread this taste in the east; what ingratitude and injustice to make no other use of his great discoveries than to despise him because he did not discover all! it is true his philosophy is not exact; but Moschus, the great Moschus, has not he himself had recourse to an ethereal fluid in order to explain his principle of attraction,

which, as at first represented by his disciples, was wholly unintelligible, a mere occult quality. I know that the Greeks love the agreeable kinds of knowledge more than abstract ideas; the arts of imitation more than nice speculations; but they do not despise the sublime sciences: on the contrary, they excel in them when they apply their minds to the study of them. Have we in all the east such a (*d*) history of physics as that written by Anaximenes? Do not you find beauties in Homer, the fables of Æsop, Archelochus's satyrs, and in the dramatic pieces which are acted at Athens to render vice odious and ridiculous? I repeat what I said to Solon, the Greeks have a finer taste than other nations. It is for want of sensibility that we do not sufficiently admire the delicate thoughts, the tender passions, the natural and unaffected graces in their writings. The poem of Abaris the Scythian concerning the (*e*) ruin of the garden of the Hesperides would have been more perfect if the author had been a Greek. We see there all the efforts of a genius that can rise to the highest heaven, descend to the lowest abyss, and fly with a ra-

(*d*) A kind of history like that of the academy of sciences in France.

(*e*) It might be somewhat like Milton's Paradise lost.

pid wing from one end of immensity to the other; yet Abaris, the admirable Abaris, does he always distinguish between the natural and the low, sublimity and bombast, enthusiasm and fury, delicacy and subtilty? I grant that the Greeks seem to be sometimes taken up too much with trifles and amusements; but the great men among them have the secret of preparing the most important affairs, even while they are diverting themselves: they are sensible that the mind has need now then of rest; but in these relaxations they can put in motion the greatest machines by the smallest springs; they look upon life as a kind of sport, but such as resembles the Olympic games, where mirthful dancing is mixed with laborious exercises. They love strangers more than other nations, and their country deserves to be stiled the common country of mankind. It is for these qualities that I prefer the Greeks to other nations, and not because of their politeness.

True politeness is common to delicate souls of all nations, and is not peculiar to any one people. External civility is but the form established in the different countries for expressing that politeness of the soul. I prefer the civility of the Greeks to that of other nations, because it is more simple and less troublesome; it ex-



cludes all superfluous formality; its only aim is to render company and conversation easy and agreeable: but internal politeness is very different from that superficial civility. You were not present that day when Pythagoras spoke to me upon this head; I will tell you his notion of politeness to which his own practice is answerable. It is an evenness of soul which excludes at the same time both insensibility and too much earnestness; it supposes a quickness in discerning what may suit the different characters of men; it is a sweet condescension by which we adapt ourselves to each man's taste, not to flatter his passions, but to avoid provoking them. In a word, it is a forgetting of ourselves in order to seek what may be agreeable to others, but in so delicate a manner as to let them scarce perceive that we are so employed: it knows how to contradict with respect, and to please without adulation, and is equally remote from an insipid complaisance and a low familiarity. Cyrus and Araspes were discoursing together in this manner when they discovered the coasts of Phœnicia and they soon after arrived at Tyre.

T H E  
T R A V E L S

O F

C Y R U S.

S E V E N T H B O O K.

**T**HE king of Babylon having destroyed ancient Tyre, the inhabitants had built a new city in a neighbouring island, thirteen furlongs from the shore. This island stretched itself in form of a crescent, and enclosed a bay where the ships lay in shelter from the winds; divers rows of cedar beautified the port; and at each end of it was a fortress for the security of the town and of the shipping. In the middle of the mole was a portico of twelve rows of pillars, where, at certain hours of the day, the people of all nations assembled to buy and

all; there one might hear all languages spoken, and see the manners and habits of all the different nations; so that Tyre seemed the capital of the universe. A prodigious number of vessels were floating upon the water, some going, others arriving; here the mariners were mending their sails while the weary rowers enjoyed repose; there one might see new-built vessels launched; a vast multitude of people crowded the port; some were busy in unloading ships, others in transporting merchandise, and others in filling the magazines; all were in motion, earnest at work, and eager in promoting trade.

Cyrus observed a good while with pleasure this scene of hurry and business, and then advancing towards one end of the mole, met a man whom he thought he knew: am I deceived? cried out the prince, or is it Amenophis who has left his solitude to come into the society of men? It is I, replied the Egyptian; I have changed my retreat at Arabia; I have another at the foot of mount Libanus. Cyrus surprised at this alteration, asked him the reason: Arobal, said Amenophis, is the cause of it; that Arobal of whom I spoke to you formerly, who was prisoner with me at Memphis, and my fellow-slave in the mines of

Egypt, was son to the king of Tyre, but knew not his birth; he has ascended the throne of his ancestors, and his true name is Ecnibal; I enjoy a perfect tranquillity in his dominion; come and see a prince who is worthy of your friendship. I have always had a concern for him, replied Cyrus, on account of your friendship for him, but I could never forgive his leaving you: I rejoice with you on your finding him again, I long impatiently to see him, and to testify to him the satisfaction I feel.

Amenophis conducted the prince to the royal palace, and presented him to the king: noble souls make acquaintance at first sight, nor does it require time to form strict friendships, where a sympathy of thoughts and sentiments have prepared the way for them. The king of Tyre asked Cyrus divers questions about his country, his travels, and the manners of the different nations he had seen: he was charmed with the noble sentiments and delicate taste which discovered themselves in the young prince's discourse, who on the other hand admired the good sense and virtue of Ecnibal; he spent some days at his court, and at length desired Amenophis to relate to him the misfortunes of the king of Tyre, and by what means he had ascended the throne.

The Egyptian sage retired one day with Cyrus and Araspes into the hollow of a rock beautified with shell-work; from thence they had a view of the sea, the city of Tyre, and the fertile country about it; on one side mount Libanus bounded the prospect, and on the other the isle of Cyprus seemed to fly away upon the waves; they all three sat down upon a bed of moss, on the brink of a fountain whose still waters seemed to sleep in their very source. When they had reposed themselves a while, the Egyptian sage began thus:

While Ecnibal was yet a child in his cradle, his father died; his uncle Itobal aspiring to the throne, resolved to rid himself of the young prince: but Bahal, to whom his education was committed, spread a report of his death, to preserve him from the cruelty of the tyrant, and sent him to a solitary part of the country at the foot of mount Libanus, where he made him pass for his own son under the name of Arobal, without discovering his birth even to the prince himself. When Ecnibal was in his fourteenth year, Bahal formed the design of placing him upon the throne: the usurper being apprized of it, clapt up the loyal Tyrian in prison, and threatened him with the most cruel death, if he did not deliver up the young

prince into his hands. Bahal would make no discovery, being resolved to die rather than fail in his duty and affection for Ecnibal. In the mean while the tyrant, knowing the heir of the crown to be yet living, was greatly disturbed and incensed. To satiate his rage and calm his disquiet, he ordered all Bahal's children to be put to death; but a faithful slave, having notice of it, contrived to save Ecnibal; so that he left Phœnicia without knowing the secret of his birth. Bahal escaped out of prison by throwing himself from a high tower into the sea; he gained the shore by swimming, and retired to Babylon, where he made himself known to Nabuchodonosor. To revenge himself for the murder of his children, he stirred up that conqueror to make war upon Itobal, and to undertake the long siege of Tyre. The king of Babylon, being informed of the bravery and capacity of Bahal, chose him to command in chief in this expedition. Itobal was killed, and after the taking of the town, Bahal was raised to the throne of Tyre by Nabuchodonosor, who in that manner recompensed his services and fidelity. Bahal did not suffer himself to be dazzled by the lustre of royalty; having learned that Ecnibal had escaped the rage of the tyrant, his first care was to send on



ver all Asia to seek him, but he could learn no news of him; for we were then in the mines of Egypt.

Arobal having wandered a long time in Africa, and lost the slave, his conductor, engaged himself in Apries's troops, being resolved either to end his days, or to distinguish himself by some glorious action. I have formerly given you an account of our first acquaintance, our mutual friendship, our common slavery, and our separation. Upon his leaving me he went to Babylon, where he was informed of the revolution which had happened at Tyre, and that Bahal, whom he believed his father, was raised to the throne; he left the court of Nabuchodonosor without delay, and soon arrived in Phœnicia, where he was introduced to Bahal. The good old man, loaded with years, was reposing himself upon a rich carpet; joy gave him strength; he got up, ran to Arobal, examined him, recalled all his features, and in a word knew him to be the same; he could no longer contain himself, he fell upon his neck, embraced him, bedewed his face with tears, and cried out with transport; It is thou whom I see, it is Ecnibal himself, the son of my master, the child whom I saved from the tyrant's hands, the innocent cause of my

disgrace, and the subject of my glory; I can then shew my gratitude towards the king who is no more, by restoring his son. Ah gods! it is thus that you recompence my fidelity, I die content. He immediately dispatched ambassadors to the court of Babylon, to ask permission of the king to resign the crown, and recognize Ecnibal for his lawful master. It was thus that the prince of Tyre ascended the throne of his ancestors, and Bahal died soon after.

As soon as Arobal was restored, he sent a Tyrian to me in my solitude, to inform me of his fortune, and to press me to come and live at his court: I was charmed to hear of his happiness, and to find that he still loved me; I expressed my joy in the warmest manner, and signified to the Tyrian, that all my desires were satisfied, since my friend was happy; but I absolutely refused to leave my retirement: he sent to me again to conjure me to come and assist him in the labours of royalty; I answered, that he was sufficiently knowing to fulfil all his obligations, and that his past misfortunes would enable him to shun the dangers to which supreme authority is exposed. At last, seeing that nothing could move me, he left Tyre under pretence of going to Babylon,

to do homage to the Assyrian king, and arrived very soon at my solitude. We tenderly embraced each other a long while; Doubtless you thought, said he to me, that I had forgotten you, that our separation proceeded from the cooling of my friendship, and that ambition had seduced my heart; but you were deceived: it is true that when I left you I could no longer support retirement, I had no peace in it; this restlessness no doubt proceeded from the gods themselves; they drew me away to accomplish the designs of their wisdom; I could enjoy no repose while I resisted them: it was thus that they conducted me to the throne by unknown paths; grandeur has not changed my heart; I shew me that absence has not diminished your friendship; come and support me in the midst of the toils and dangers in which an elevated state engages me. Ah! said I to him, do not force me to quit my solitude; suffer me to enjoy the repose which the gods have granted me; grandeur excites the passions; courts are stormy seas, I have been already shipwrecked, and have happily escaped; expose me not to the like misfortune a second time. I perceive your thoughts, replied Ecnibal, you are afraid of the friendship of kings, you have experienced their incon-

stancy, you have found that their favour is frequently but the forerunner of their hatred; Apries loved you once, and deserted you afterwards; but alas! should you compare me with Apries? No, no, replied I, I shall always distrust the friendship of a prince brought up in luxury and effeminacy like the king of Egypt; but for you, who were educated far from a throne, and in ignorance of your rank, and have since been tried by such a variety of adverse fortune, I have no fear that the regal dignity should alter your sentiments: the gods have conducted you to the throne, you must fulfil the duties incumbent upon a king, and sacrifice yourself to the public good; but for me, nothing obliges me to engage anew in tumult and trouble; I have no thought but to die in solitude, where wisdom nourishes my heart, and where the hope of being soon reunited to the great Osiris makes me forget all my past misfortunes.

Here a torrent of tears obliged us to silence, which Ecnibal at length breaking, said to me: Has then the study of wisdom served only to make Amenophis insensible? Well, if you will grant nothing to friendship, come at least to defend me from the frailties of human nature; I shall one day perhaps forget that I have been

unfortunate, I may come to be unmoved with the miseries of men, supreme authority will perhaps poison my heart, and render me like other princes; come and preserve me from the errors to which my state is ever liable; come and confirm me in all those maxims of virtue with which you formerly inspired me; I feel that I have more need of a friend than ever. Ecnibal melted me with these words, and I consented to follow him, but upon condition that I should not live at court, that I should never have any employment there, and that I should retire into some solitary place near Tyre; I have only changed one retreat for another, that I might have the pleasure of being nearer my friend. We left Arabia Felix, went to Babylon, and saw there Nabuchodonosor; but alas! how different is he now from what he was heretofore! he is no longer that conqueror who reigned in the midst of triumphs, and astonished the nations with the splendor of his glory; for some time past he has lost his reason; he flies the society of men, and wanders about in the mountains and woods like a wild beast; how terrible a fate for so great a prince! When we arrived at Tyre, I chose my retreat at the foot of mount Libanus, in the same place where Ecnibal was brought up; I come here

sometimes to see him, and he goes frequently to my solitude. Nothing can impair our friendship, because truth is the only bond of it. I see by this example, that royalty is not, as I imagined, incompatible with tender sentiments: all depends on the first education of princes, adversity is the best school for them, it is there that heroes are formed, Apries had been spoiled by prosperity in his youth, Arobal is confirmed in virtue by misfortunes.

Cyrus's esteem for Ecnibal was much heightened by this relation: he admired that prince's constancy in friendship more than all his other great qualities. During his stay at Tyre, he was entertained in a very magnificent manner, and often expressed to the king his astonishment at the splendor which reigned in that city. Be not surpris'd at it, answered the Tyrian prince, wherever commerce flourishes under the protection of wise laws, plenty becomes quickly universal, and magnificence costs the state nothing. Cyrus, upon this, desired the king of Tyre to explain to him how he had brought his dominions into such a flourishing condition in so short a time.

The wisest of the Hebrew kings, said Ecnibal, shewed many ages ago to what a pitch of splendor and magnificence commerce will raise



a little state: his ships sailed even to the remotest islands to import from thence the wealth, perfumes, and rich commodities of the East: after the ruin and captivity of the Hebrews, we seized upon all the branches of their commerce. Tyre is happily situated, her inhabitants understand navigation, trade was at first perfectly free there, strangers were treated as citizens of Tyre: but under the reign of Itobal, all fell to ruin; instead of keeping our ports open according to the old custom, he shut them up out of political views, formed a design of changing the fundamental constitution of Phœnicia, and of rendering a nation warlike, that had always shunned having any part in the quarrels of her neighbours. By this means commerce languished, and our strength diminished; Itobal drew upon us the wrath of the king of Babylon, who razed our ancient city, and made us tributary. As soon as Bahal was placed upon the throne, he endeavoured to remedy these mischiefs: I have but followed the plan which that good prince left me.

He began by opening his ports to strangers, and by restoring the freedom of commerce. He declared that his name should never be made use of in it, but to support its rights, and make its laws be observed. The authority of princes

is too formidable for other men to enter into partnership with them. Commerce was carried on in the first republics only by exchange of merchandise; but this method was found troublesome, and subject to many inconveniences: the value of provisions is not always the same, they cannot be transported without expence, nor distributed without trouble, nor long kept without spoiling. It was necessary to have such a common measure of the value of merchandise, as should be incorruptible, profitable and divisible, into small parts for the convenience of the poorest citizens. Metals seemed proper for this use, and it is this common measure which is called money. The public treasure having been exhausted by long wars; there was not money enough in Phœnicia to set the people to work; arts languished, and agriculture itself was neglected. Bahal engaged the principal merchants to advance considerable sums to the artisans, while the former trafficked together upon safe credit; but this credit never took place among the labourers and mechanics. Coin is not only a common measure for regulating the price of the several kinds of merchandise, but it is a sure pledge which has intrinsic value, and pretty near the same in all nations. Bahal would

not have this pledge ever taken out of the hands of the people, because they have need of it to secure themselves against the corruption of ministers, the oppression of the rich, and even the ill use which kings might make of their authority. In order to encourage the Tyrians to work, he not only left every one in the free possession of his gain, but allotted great rewards for those who should excel by their genius, or distinguish themselves by any new invention. He built great work-houses for manufactures: he lodged there all those who were eminent in their respective arts: and that their attention might not be taken off by uneasy cares, he supplied all their wants, and he flattered their ambition, by granting them such honours and distinctions in his capital as were suitable to their condition. He took off the exorbitant imposts, and forbade all monopolies; so that neither buyers nor sellers are under any constraint or oppression. Trade being left free, my subjects import hither in abundance all the best things which the universe affords, and they sell them at reasonable rates. All sorts of provisions pay me a very small tribute at entering: the less I fetter trade, the more my treasures increase: the diminution of imposts diminishes the price of merchandise: the less

dear things are, the more are consumed of them, and by this consumption my revenues exceed greatly what they would amount to by laying excessive duties. Kings, who think to enrich themselves by their exactions, are not only enemies to their own people, but ignorant of their own interests.

I perceive, said Cyrus, that commerce is a source of great advantages in a state: I believe that it is the only secret to create plenty in great monarchies, and to repair the desolations caused there by war: numerous troops quickly exhaust a kingdom, if we cannot draw subsistence for them from foreign countries by a flourishing trade. Have a care, said Aménophis, that you do not mistake. Commerce ought not to be neglected in great monarchies, but it must be regulated by other rules than in petty republics. Phœnicia carries on commerce, not only to supply her own wants, but those of foreign states. As her territories are small, her strength consists in making herself useful, and even necessary to all her neighbours: her merchants bring from the remotest islands the riches of nature, and distribute them afterwards among other nations. It is not her own superfluities, but those of other countries, which are the foundation of her trade. In a

city like Tyre, where commerce is the only support of the state, all the principal citizens are traders, the merchants are the princes of the republic: but in great empires, where military virtue and subordination of ranks are absolutely necessary, commerce ought to be encouraged without being universal. To this end, it is necessary to establish companies, grant them privileges, and entrust them with the general commerce of the nation: they should make settlements in remote islands, and maintain a naval force for their defence against pirates: those who cannot employ themselves in trade, shall lodge their money in these public companies: the magistrates, priests, and military men, cannot traffic without neglecting their proper employments, and demeaning themselves: those trading companies shall be the depositaries of every private man's money, which thus united, will produce an hundred-fold. In a kingdom that is fruitful, spacious, populous, and abounding with sea-ports, if the people are laborious, they may draw from the bosom of the earth immense treasures, which would be lost by the negligence and sloth of its inhabitants. By improving the productions of nature by manufactures, the national riches are augmented; and it is by

carrying these fruits of industry to other nations, that a solid commerce is established in a great empire: but nothing should be exported to other countries but its superfluities, nor any thing imported from them but what is purchased with those superfluities. By this means the state will never contract any debts abroad, the balance of trade will be always on its side, and it will draw from other nations wherewith to defray the expences of war: great advantages will be reaped from commerce without destroying the distinction of ranks, or weakening military virtue: one of the chief accomplishments of a prince is to know the genius of his people, the productions of nature in his kingdom, and how to make the best advantage of them: Cyrus, by his conversation with Ecnibal and Amenophis, learnt many useful notions and maxims in government which he had not met with in other countries; they were of great service to him after the taking of Sardis, when he ordered gold money to be coined; and turned the K. of Lydia's treasures into specie (a).

The next day Cyrus accompanied the king of Tyre some furlongs from his capital, to assist at the annual rites instituted in commemoration of the death of Adonis. Between He

(a) See Sir Isaac Newton's Chronol.



liopolis and Byblos there was a stately temple consecrated to Venus: on one side of the portal was placed a statue of the goddess, she leaned her declining head on her left hand, grief appeared in her countenance, and tears seemed to flow from her eyes, which were turned upon the statue of her lover placed on the other side: a stream of blood seemed to spring from his heart, and to dye the river Thammuz, whose purple waters rolled with impetuosity towards the sea. The frizes and the architraves were adorned with sculptures in bas-relief, representing the three metamorphoses of the goddess, the history of her unfaithfulness, and of all the effects of Adonis's constancy.

The temple was built of fine Parian marble: its immense vault represented that of heaven: in the middle of it appeared the chariot of the sun encircled by the planets, and at a greater distance the empyreum spangled with stars. Upon the altar stood a statue of the goddess; she held in her hand the globe of the world, and upon her wonderful girdle were described the twelve constellations. The artist had animated the marble in such a manner, that the statue expressed three different passions, according to the different points of view from

whence it was beheld (b): at a distance it was a noble and majestic beauty that seemed to invite with a soft smile, accompanied with a tender and modest look: upon a nearer view her face, turned towards the east, proclaimed the peaceful joy of a soul that sees the beauty of truth, possesses it; and is possessed by it: when viewed from the other side, she seemed to turn away her eyes, and despise those who durst approach her with a profane heart and impure thoughts. In the sculptures of the altar, Love, (a) under the shape of Adonis, seemed to descend from heaven; his infant look spoke nothing but candour, innocence and simplicity: the Virtues walked before him; the Muses followed him, and the Graces hovered about him: he had no bandage upon his eyes, and held in his hand a lighted torch, to shew that he enlightens at the same time that he inflames.

When Cyrns entered the temple, he found all the people, clad in mourning, in a cavern,

(b) The Venus of Medicis is said in like manner to have three different aspects, according to the different points of view from which it is beheld.

(a) Since there are two Venus's, says Plato, there must be two loves, and he calls this love the great god, *ἡ δὲ ἑστὴ ἐστὶν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ Δαίμωνος ἐν ἑσίοις*. CONV. p. 372, 180.

where the image of a young man was lying upon a bed of flowers and odoriferous herbs. Nine days were spent in fasting, prayer, and lamentations, after which the public sorrow was changed into gladness: songs of joy succeeded to weeping, (b) and the whole assembly began this sacred hymn. 'Adonis is returned to life, Urania weeps no more, he is re-ascended to heaven, he will soon come down again upon earth, to banish thence both crimes and miseries for ever.'

Cyrus was struck with the august solemnity of the Tyrian rites: he knew nothing of the history of Venus and Adonis, but by the mythology of the Greeks, and suspected that they had debased it according to their custom: he desired Amenophis to explain to him the true meaning of the Phœnician ceremonies. The wise Egyptian sat down with the young prince over-against the great gate of the temple, in a place from whence they could see the statues of the god and goddess, with all the bas-reliefs that represented their adventures, and then said: It is not long since the Greeks were strangers to letters, the muses and the

(b) All these Tyrian rites are to be found in Lucian. St. Jerome, St. Cyril, Julius Firmicus, Macrobius and Procopius. See Disc.

sciences: their understanding is still young; they have no true knowledge of antiquity: they have disfigured all the mysteries of the ancient religion by their absurd fictions and gross images: the combats of Mythras, the murder of Osiris, the death of Adonis, the banishment of Apollo, and the labours of Hercules, represent to us the same truths; but different nations have painted them under different similitudes: what we learn from the Tyrian annals is as follows:

Before the formation of the elements, the heavens and the earth, an eternal silence reigned through all the ethereal regions, and the music of the stars had not yet begun: the great god (*b*) Belus dwelt in an inaccessible light with the goddess (*c*) Urania, who incessantly sprang from his head, and with the god (*d*) Adonis, whom he had engendred like un-

(*b*) Belus or Baali was anciently one of the names of the true God among the Hebrews. See Hosea, chap. ii. ver. 16. and Selden de Diis Syris, chap. i. Syntag. 2.

(*c*) Urania, Minerva and Isis, are the same, See Seld. ibid. cap. 4.

(*d*) Ἰ Ἀδωνις, δισπότης apud Phenices unde Laconibus Κύρις id est Κύριος. Seld. ib. c. 11. Adonis comes from the word Adonai, one of the ten names of God. Vid. D. Hier. Ep. ad Marcel. This Adonis is the same with the Logos of Plato, whom he defines Ἐκγονον ὁ τὰ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐγενήσεν ἀτάλογον ἑαυτῷ. See Disc,

to himself. Belus being more and more charmed with the beauty of his son, desired that there might be several miniatures and living images of him. Adonis, animated by the power of Belus, moulded some rays of light, and made suns, stars and numberless worlds invisible to us; but as yet there were no inhabitants for them. He looked upon his mother, and on a sudden he saw spring out from the vast abyss a beautiful flower which contained the soul of the world; Adonis breathed upon it; what cannot the almighty breath of a god? The flower swelled, expanded itself and was changed into a young goddess whom he named (a) Urania after his mother. Transported with love and pleasure, he would have presented her to his father, but she was not yet able to support the splendor of the divine presence, or to breathe the pure air of the empyreum.

Adonis placed the young goddess in a star, in the centre of the universe, from whence she could see the course of all the heavenly bodies, and hear the music of the celestial spheres: he

(a) Pausanias tells us that there were two Urania's, the celestial Venus, and the Venus ἀπὸς οὐρα of the Greeks, Verticordia of the Latins, which is as much as to say, Venus convertens cor suum as well as aliorum. See Disc.

then said to her, Beautiful Urania, I love you, and design you for a more transcendent glory than what you at present enjoy; I intend to make you my spouse, bless you with a happy race that shall people the heavens, and conduct you at last with all your children into the sublime place above the stars where my father dwells: the only condition I require of you is, that you never wish to know more than what suits your present state, that unreasonable curiosity would render you both unhappy and criminal: such are the immutable laws of Belus. Urania thought herself too happy to enjoy her felicity on such easy terms; she loved Adonis more than all the glory that he promised her, the sight of her lover made her forget all his gifts; he looked upon her with complacency and by this look made her pregnant; she became the mother of all the divinities without ceasing to be the immortal virgin; she quickly peopled the stars with gods and goddesses, who had no other law but that of obeying the will of Adonis, loving each other tenderly as the children of the same father, and aspiring by their virtue to become one day worthy of seeing the god Belus.

Urania continued long faithful; she followed



Adonis every where, he led her through the immense spaces to shew her the numberless worlds which he had there produced; he often talked with her of the superior regions, and of the pleasure which she would one day feel in knowing him of whom all nature is but a faint image, in comparing the original with its pictures, and seeing their various relations. These discourses kindled in her the fatal curiosity, she began to be weary of her happiness, and had no longer any relish for the pleasures she enjoyed: she durst not speak, but Adonis perceived the first motions of her unfaithfulness, and endeavoured to stop its progress; she grew pensive, melancholy, distrustful, and broke out at last in these bitter complaints: Adonis, cruel Adonis! why did you give me the idea of a happiness which makes me miserable? You promised to carry me up to the empyreum, shew me the kingdom of your father, and make me partaker of his glory; you should have concealed your designs from me, or have accomplished them sooner. Imprudent Urania, replied Adonis, you are going to ruin yourself in spite of me, you are not yet capable of beholding the god Belus, you would not be able to support the splendor of his presence, he will be loved as he deserves before he manifests himself as he is;

the smallest desire, the least motion contrary to his order is an inroad on his right.

A vain curiosity and an ambitious desire of knowing overcame the goddess, she no longer beheld Adonis with the same complacency, she no longer found the same charms in his company, she received his caresses with coldness and indifference; he renewed all his endeavours to cure her distempered mind, but to no purpose; she forced him at length to leave her: the gods are delicate in love, and cannot suffer a divided heart; he re-ascended to his father and left her alone, hoping that the pains of absence would recover her from her error. As soon as he was gone she renewed her complaint, and tormented herself with new reflections; she began to doubt, and by that doubting she became darkened; she suspected all that Adonis had said to her of his father and of the superior regions to be only a chimera; she forgot her origin and her dependent state; to convince her of her error, she was thrown down from the ethereal regions into the sphere of the sun; she drew after her the inhabitants of the seven other stars; these luminous bodies lost their light, became planets, and rolled about the sun to receive its influences: the gods who inhabited them became demi-gods, and the goddess

Urania was condemned to live in the moon; she now enjoyed only a borrowed light, was clothed with an aerial and transparent body which the Greeks call the subtle vehicle of the soul; she no longer breathed as formerly the pure æther, which made her life and nourishment; she lived upon nectar and ambrosia with the demi-gods, whom she had drawn after her in her fall. Adonis ever faithful and ever loving descended into the sun to be nearer to his beloved Urania; he took the name of Apollo and tried new means to make her sensible of her fault: sometimes she was softened, she yielded to the sun's attraction, and brought her silver car near his rays; then on a sudden he changed her sentiments and wandred from him; she became inconstant and fantastical, she put on new forms according as she retired from her lover or approached to him; she at length gave way to her ambition, and made the inhabitants of the planets adore her under the name of (a) Astarte or the Queen of heaven.

By the laws of immutable fate it was necessary that the goddess should undergo a new metamorphosis as a punishment for her new

(a) Quid Urania nisi coeli Regina, Luna, Astarte. Videlon de Diis-Syris, cap. 2. syntag. 2. See Apul. Met. 11.

crime: she fell from the moon to the earth, and took the name of Venus. The inhabitants of the planets did not all follow her example, she seduced but a small number of them, and the demi-gods became men, but men of the golden age, they were not yet guilty of gross crimes; they still preserved some marks of their original nature. The goddess by changing her element changed her food, instead of ambrosia she fed only upon fruits, instead of drinking nectar she quenched her thirst in limpid streams and clear fountains; she had not as yet lost either her transparency or her agility, she could mount into the air when she pleased, but she could not rise to the superior regions. Adonis left the sun, took the form of a young man, and came and dwelt with Venus upon earth: at first she did not discover who he was and fell in love with him; but having felt his divine influences she knew him, was afraid and fled from him: he pursued her, he called after her, and at last stopt her; but she escaped him again: he could have employed his almighty power, but the gods will be loved by choice; he endeavoured to touch her heart by complaints and tears, by caresses and threats, but she had no longer any taste for the refined delights of virtue; her first pride was now changed into a profane love of

pleasure, and she forced Adonis to quit her a third time.

The inhabitants of the stars saw these repeated instances of Urania's ingratitude, and began to be shaken in their obedience: Belus, said they, has no such aversion to vice as we imagined, since he does not punish it; since rebellion is not followed by misery, why are we subject to laws? It is true Urania is no longer what she was, but she is still a goddess and still happy: provided we enjoy pleasure, it is no matter upon what terms: independence and liberty heighten the relish of the most vulgar enjoyments. An universal revolt was breeding through all the celestial regions, the designs of Belus were going to be frustrated: he called to Adonis into that solitude above the heavens where he lived with him before the formation of the stars, and said to him: I repent me to have drawn the imprudent Urania from her original flower, you see her ingratitude and her obstinacy notwithstanding all your endeavours to reclaim her; universal harmony is disturbed, the celestial monarchy is shaken, and the heavenly spirits begin to despise my sovereign laws: should I pardon the inhabitants of the earth, my clemency would encourage a new revolt, and the sight of their impunity would have a

bad influence on all the inhabitants of the stars, who already begin to murmur and to suspect my goodness of indifferency with regard to crimes; I cannot vindicate the honour of my laws, nor confirm the immortals in their duty, without annihilating the unfaithful goddess and all her rebellious children. These terrible words rent the vault of heaven, resounded even to the abyss, and frightened the kingdom of chaos and eternal night. Belus at length lifted up his sceptre to replunge the earth and all its inhabitants into their original nothing: Adonis threw himself at his father's feet, he withheld his avenging arm by these words: I love Urania notwithstanding her unfaithfulness, I see her errors and follies with grief, but her children are yours since they are mine; punish them, but do not entirely destroy them; should they enjoy a happy immortality upon earth, they would think no more of re-ascending to heaven: curse their habitation, blast its beauty, expose the guilty race to sickness and death, but let your punishments be remedies; all the celestial and terrestrial Deities who know the crimes of Urania will see also her misery, and be confirmed in their duty by her punishment. He spoke, and suddenly the pillars of the earth were shaken, the poles of the heaven



stars, changed their situation, the sun grew pale and retired to a greater distance, the moon and the five planets altered their motions, thunder, winds and rain mingled and confounded the elements, the herbs, and flowers faded, and the trees dried up and withered, the earth refused its usual bounty, the fruitfulness of nature degenerated into a horrible barrenness.

Venus struck with terror fell into a long swoon, and when she recovered out of it beheld nothing but desolation all around her; she found herself in a frightful desert, upon the banks of the river Thammuz, whose plaintive murmurs seemed to proclaim Urania's crime: her misfortunes did not change her heart, she sought to compensate her real miseries by creating to herself imaginary pleasures; she caused temples to be erected every where to her honour, she invented impure sacrifices and a profane worship; her altars were quickly besmeared with the blood of harmless animals; instead of odoriferous herbs and exquisite fruits, she fed upon the flesh of the victims, she sought for all sorts of meats which might excite and nourish her sensuality, she gave herself up to the blind instinct of pleasure, her blood grew thick, and flowed no longer in her veins with the same freedom and amenity; the subtle ve-

hicle of the soul was wrapt round with a terrestrial and gross body; Venus could no longer fly in the air, she lost her lightness and transparency and became mortal; her children underwent the same fate, she saw many of them expire before her eyes by intemperance and voluptuousness; others hoping to shun the decrees of fate heaped mountains upon mountains, and endeavoured to scale heaven; but being struck down and crushed by thunderbolts, they dug themselves an abyss in the bosom of chaos, where Pluto, their chief, erected his empire, and Venus was there adored under the name of Proserpine.

The goddess became frantic, she ran about the mountains and valleys, bewailed her children and worshippers and blasphemed against Belus. Adonis heard her, he left the celestial regions and came down upon earth; she perceived him at a distance, and would have thrown herself into the water to hide herself from his presence, but he stopped her and sat down by her; she held down her head with shame and confusion and was afraid to look upon him; finding at last that he made her no reproach, she raised her eyes from the ground, but durst not yet fix them upon his face: she recovered heart by degrees, she observed him nearly, she

held him pale, meagre and disfigured; he had no longer any remains of his former beauty, he was covered with wounds and bruises; he continued a long time silent, and the durst not speak; at last he said to her, Ah Venus, constant Venus! you bewail your own miseries, but you are insensible to mine? To what a condition have you reduced me? *Judge of your guilt by my sufferings*: The God Belus was going to destroy you and all your race if I had not softened him: I came down myself upon earth to make reparation for your offences against the immutable laws of the empyreum, and to make war with all the monsters which your crimes have brought forth. (b) I have killed the serpent Python, the Nemean lion, the hydra of Lerna which sprang from your head when you became false, the Centaurs that devoured men, the Cyclops who forged the thunderbolts, the wild boar of Erymanthus that wounded me with his murderous tusk, the symphalian birds that spoiled the fruits of the earth, and the dragon which had seized the garden of Hesperia; I have driven them all down into hell, and am going to pursue them

(b) Mythras, Osiris, Adonis, Apollo and Hercules are the different names of the middle God. See Disc.

thither that I may complete my conquest: Adonis as he uttered these words fell into a mortal agony, a stream of blood gushed forth from his heart and dyed the waters of the river Tham-muz. All the children of Venus assembled about him, he opened his eyes from time to time, and repeated these words with a sigh, *Judge of your guilt by my sufferings*; he continued thus many hours, and at last expired through an excess of pain. His soul descended into hell to deliver Theseus, Pirithous, all the heroes vanquished by Pluto, and all the manes that suffered in those gloomy habitations.

Venus bewailed her lover for nine days and nine nights: she continued disconsolate near the dead body, and could not tear herself away from it. Being at length exhausted with grief she fell into a profound sleep, nor did she awake till her ears were struck by a heavenly voice; she looked up and beheld Adonis in the air surrounded by all the heroes, and all the shades which he had brought back from the dark abode. He had resumed his first form and his pristine beauty; he darted upon her a heavenly ray to restore her strength and calm her spirit, and then said to her: I have followed you, my dear Urania, I have followed you in all your wanderings; I descended into the moon,

upon earth, and even into hell to deliver you  
and your disloyal children; I have suffered all  
that a god can suffer in seeing your fallhood  
and inconstancy; but you are now no longer  
insensible to my love, and I don't repent of my  
sufferings; I leave you, but my wisdom shall  
never forsake you if you continue faithful to  
me; farèwel, dear Urania, you can see me no  
more till you be transformed into my image,  
the gods are only enamoured with their own  
beauty: you must suffer a thousand miseries  
before this happy metamorphosis, nor can you  
re-ascend to heaven but by the same way by  
which you fell from it; you must first be strip-  
ped of your terrestrial body by sufferings, dis-  
eases and death; you shall then rise to the re-  
gions of the moon where you will undergo a  
(c) second death by the destruction of your ae-  
rial body; your pure spirit, free and disenga-  
ged from every thing that could stop it, will  
fly away to the stars, where you will resume  
your former beauty, but you must at length  
lose even that before you are transformed into  
my image. When you have undergone these  
three metamorphoses, expiated your guilt by  
the purifying pains of each new transformation,  
practised upon earth, in the moon and in the

(c) See the Disc,

stars, all the human, heroic and divine virtues, you shall ascend with me into the sublime place above the heavens, where you shall see the God Belus, and the goddess my mother; virtue, truth and justice, not as they are here below, but as they exist in him who is being itself. Fear nothing, I will be present with you in all these states, I will help you to support your sufferings if you never cease to invoke me: those of your children who shall imitate your example shall re-ascend with you to the fields of Hecate, the rest shall descend to the gloomy kingdom of Pluto, and be there tormented till they are purified from their crimes. I have chained up the fierce Cerberus, henceforward he shall be only the vile instrument of my justice. (d) I have established judges in hell, who will inflict punishments only to exterminate vice; they will not annihilate the essence of the soul, but restore it to a true existence by purging it of all irregular passions. When your children have been, (e) plunged nine times

(d) See Disc

(e) Ergo exercentur poenis, veterumque malorum  
Supplicia expendunt: Aliae panduntur inanes,  
Suspensae ad ventos; aliis sub gurgite vasto  
Insectum eluditur scelus, aut exurgitur igni.  
Donec longa dies perfecto temporis orbe



in the purifying waves of the burning Acheron, the chilling Styx, the black Cocytus and the foaming Phlegeton, they shall at length drink the waters of the river Lethe, which will make them forget all their past miseries and crimes. When there shall be no longer any mortal or immortal, in hell, upon earth, or in the planets that is not purified and prepared to behold my father, I will then return to banish all evils out of the universe, abolish hell, and re-establish harmony throughout all the immensity of space; in the mean time assemble those of your children who are willing to follow you, institute festivals to my honour, and let them be annually celebrated with pomp to perpetuate the memory of your unfaithfulness and of my love.

Cyrus was overjoyed to see that all nations were agreed in the doctrine of the three states of the world, the three forms of the divinity and a middle god, who by his conflicts and great sufferings was to expiate and exterminate

Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit  
 Aetherium sensum, et aurai simplicis ignem.  
 Has omnes ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,  
 Lethaeum ad fluvium Deus evocat agmine magno  
 Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisent.

Æn l. 6 ver. 740.

moral evil, and restore innocence and peace to the universe.

While he was yet at Tyre couriers came from Persia to inform him that Mandana was dying: This news obliged him to suspend his journey to Babylon, and to leave Phœnicia in haste: at parting he embraced the king of Tyre: O Ecnibal, said he, I envy neither your riches nor your magnificence: to be perfectly happy I desire only such a friend as Aëmonophis. Cyrus and Araspes crossed Arabia Deserta and a part of Chaldea; they passed the Tigris near the place where it joins the Euphrates, and entering Susiana, arrived in a few days at the capital of Persia. Cyrus hastened to see his mother; he found her dying, and gave himself up to grief, which he expressed by the most bitter complaints. The queen being tenderly affected with the sight of her son, endeavoured to moderate his affliction by these words; Comfort yourself; my son; souls never die; they are only condemned for a time to animate mortal bodies that they may expiate the faults they have committed in a former state: the time of my expiation is at an end: I am going to re-ascend to the sphere of fire: there I shall see Perseus, Arbaces, Deioces, Bhraortes, and all the heroes from whom you

are descended; I will tell them that you resolve to imitate them: there I shall see Cassandana, she loves you still, death changes not the sentiments of virtuous souls: we shall be always with you though invisible, we will descend in a cloud and be your protecting genii; we will accompany you in the midst of dangers; we will engage the Virtues to attend you; we will preserve you from all the errors and vices which corrupt the hearts of princes: one day your dominion will be extended, and the oracles accomplished; O my son, my dear son, remember that you ought to have no other view in conquering nations than to establish among them the empire of virtue and reason. As she uttered these last words, she turned pale, a cold sweat spread itself over all her limbs, death closed her eyes, and her soul flew away to the Elysium: she was long lamented by all Persia, and Cambyfes erected a stately monument to her memory. Cyrus's grief wore off only by degrees, and as necessity obliged him to apply himself to affairs of state.

Cambyfes was a religious and pacific prince; he had never been out of Persia, the manners of which were innocent and pure, but austere and rugged; he knew how to choose ministers capable of supplying what was defective in his

own talents; but he sometimes yielded himself up too blindly to their conduct, from a diffidence of his own understanding: he prudently resolved that Cyrus should himself enter into the administration of affairs; and having sent for him one day, said to him: Your travels, my son, have improved your knowledge, and you ought to employ it for the good of your country: you are destined not only to govern this kingdom, but also, one day, to give laws to all Asia; you should learn betimes the art of reigning, a study to which princes seldom apply themselves; they ascend the throne before they know the duties of a king: I entrust you with my authority, and will have you exercise it under my inspection; the talents of Soranes will not be useless to you, he is the son of an able minister, who served me many years with fidelity; he is young, but indefatigable, knowing and qualified for all sorts of employments.

Under the government of Cambyfes this minister had found it necessary to appear virtuous, nay, he thought himself really so, but his virtue had never been put to the trial: Soranes did not himself know the excess to which his boundless ambition could carry him. When Cyrus applied himself to learn the state and condition of Persia, her military strength, and

er interests both foreign and domestic, Soranes quickly saw with concern that he was going to lose much of his authority under a prince who had all the talents necessary for governing by himself; he endeavoured to captivate the mind of Cyrus, and studied him a long time to discover his weaknesses. The young prince was not insensible to praise, but he loved to deserve it; he had a taste for pleasure, but he was not a slave to it; he did not dislike magnificence, but he could refuse himself every thing rather than oppress his people: thus he was inaccessible to flattery, and proof against voluptuousness and pomp. Soranes perceived that there was no means to preserve his credit with Cyrus, but by making himself necessary to him by his capacity: he displayed all his talents both in public and private councils; he shewed that he possessed the secrets of the wisest policy, and at the same time could enter into that sort of *detail* in business, the knowledge of which is one of the chief qualifications of a minister; he prepared and digested matters with so much order and earnestness that he left his master little to do. No other prince would have been charmed to see himself excused from all application to business: but Cyrus resolved to see every thing

with his own eyes; he had a confidence in his father's ministers, but he would not blindly yield himself up to their councils. When Soranes perceived that the prince would himself see every thing to the bottom, he studied to throw obscurity over the most important affairs, that he might make himself yet more necessary. Cyrus observed the crafty conduct of this able and jealous minister, and managed him with so much delicacy that he drew from him by degrees what he endeavoured so artfully to conceal. When the prince thought himself sufficiently instructed, he let Soranes see that he would himself be his father's first minister; and in this manner moderated the authority of that favourite without giving him any just cause of complaint. The ambitious Soranes was nevertheless offended at the prince's conduct, and could not, without mortal uneasiness, see the fall of his credit and that he was no longer necessary; this was the first source of his discontent, which might have proved fatal to Cyrus, if virtue and prudence had not preserved him from its effects.

Persia had for some ages been in subjection to Media, but upon the marriage of Cambyses with Mandana, it had been stipulated that the king of Persia should for the future pay only a



small annual tribute as a mark of homage. From that time the Medes and Persians had lived in perfect amity till the jealousy of Cyaxares kindled the fire of discord. The Median prince was incessantly calling to mind with vexation the oracles which were spread abroad concerning the future conquests of young Cyrus; he considered him as the destroyer of his power, and imagined already that he saw him entering Ecbatan to dethrone him; he was every moment soliciting Astyages to prevent those fatal predictions, weaken the strength of Persia, and reduce it to its former dependence. Mandana, while she lived, had so dexterously managed her father as to hinder an open rupture between him and Cambyfes: but as soon as she was dead, Cyaxares renewed his solicitations with the Median emperor.

Cambyfes was informed of Cyaxares's designs and sent Hytaspes to the court of Ecbatan, to represent to Astyages the danger of mutually weakening each other's power, while the Assyrians, their common enemy, were forming schemes to extend their domination over all the East. Hytaspes, by his address, put a stop to the execution of Cyaxares's projects, and gained Cambyfes time to make his preparations in case of a rupture. The prince of Me-

dia seeing that the wise counsels of Hystaspes were favourably listened to by his father, and that there was no means suddenly to kindle a war, attempted by other ways to weaken the power of Persia: being informed of Soranes's discontent, he endeavoured to gain him by an offer of the first dignities of the empire. Soranes at first was shocked at the very thought; but being afterwards deceived by his resentment, he knew not himself the secret motives upon which he acted; his heart was not yet become insensible to virtue, but his lively imagination transformed objects, and represented them to him in the colours necessary to flatter his ambition; at length he got the better of all remorse, by reasoning with himself, that Cyaxares would one day be his lawful emperor, and that Cambyfes was but a tributary master. There is nothing which we cannot persuade ourselves to think when blinded and drawn away by strong passions. Thus he entered by degrees into a close correspondence with Cyaxares, and secretly employed all means to render Cyrus's administration odious to the Persians.

Cyrus had raised Araspes to the first dignities in the army, upon account of his capacity and talent for war; but he would not bring

him into the senate, because it was a law in Persia that no stranger should sit in the supreme council. The perfidious Soranes nevertheless pressed the young prince to infringe this law, knowing that it would be a sure means to excite the jealousy of the Satrapes, and to stir them up against Cyrus. You have need, said he to him, of a man like Araspes in your council: I know that good policy and our rules forbid the intrusting of strangers with the command of an army and the secrets of state at the same time; but a prince may dispense with the laws when he can fulfil the intention of them by more sure and easy ways, and he ought never to be the slave of rules and customs: men ordinarily act either from ambition or interest; load Araspes with dignities and riches; by that means you will make Persia his country: and he will have no reason to doubt his fidelity. Cyrus was not aware of Soranes's secret design, but he loved justice too well to depart from it. I am persuaded, answered the prince, of the fidelity and capacity of Araspes; I love him sincerely, but though my friendship were capable of making me break the laws in his favour, he is too much attached to me ever to accept a dignity, which might excite the jealousy of the Persians, and give them cause to think I was

influenced by particular inclination and friendship in affairs of state.

Soranes having in vain attempted to engage Cyrus to take this false step, endeavoured to surprise him another way, and to create a misunderstanding between him and his father he artfully made him observe the king's imperfections, his want of capacity and genius, and the necessity of pursuing other maxims than his. The mild and peaceable government of Cambyfes, said he to the prince, is incompatible with noble views; if you content yourself like him with a pacific reign, how will you become a conqueror? Cyrus made no other use of these insinuations than to avoid the rocks upon which Cambyfes had split; he did not lessen his deference and submission to his father whom he tenderly loved; he respected him even in his failings, which he endeavoured to conceal: he did nothing without his orders, he consulted him in such a manner, as at the same time to give him a just notion of things; he frequently discoursed with him in private, that the king might be able to decide in public. Cambyfes had judgment enough to distinguish, and make himself master of the excellent advices of his son, who employed the superiority of his genius only to make his father's commands respect-

ed, and never displayed his talents but to strengthen the king's authority: so admirable a behaviour greatly increased Cambyfes's affection and esteem for him, and his confidence in him; the prince never abused it, but continued the same conduct, in which he thought he did nothing more than his duty.

Soranes, enraged to see all his schemes frustrated, endeavoured secretly to raise a distrust in the minds of the Satrapes, as if the prince would inroach upon their rights and ruin their authority; and in order to augment their jealousy, he endeavoured to inspire Cyrus with despotic principles. You are destined by the gods, said he, to stretch your empire one day over all the East; in order to a happy execution of this design you should accustom the Persians to a blind obedience; captivate the Satrapes by dignities and pleasures; put them under a necessity of frequenting your court if they would partake of your favours; get the sovereign authority by degrees into your own hands; abridge the rights of the senate, leave it only the privilege of giving you counsel: a prince should not abuse his power, but he ought never to share it with his subjects; monarchy is the most perfect kind of government; the true strength of a state, secrecy in councils

and expedition in enterprizes, depend upon the sovereign power's being lodged in a single person: a petty republic may subsist under the government of many heads, but great empires can be formed only by the absolute authority of one; other principles are the chimerical ideas of weak minds, who are conscious of their want of capacity to execute great designs.

The prince was shocked at this discourse, but concealed his indignation out of prudence, and dexterously breaking off the conversation, left Soranes in a persuasion that he relished his maxims. As soon as Cyrus was alone, he made deep reflexions on all that had passed: he called to mind the conduct of Amasis, and began to suspect Soranes's fidelity: he had not indeed any certain proofs of his perfidiousness; but a man who had the boldness to suggest to him such counsels, seemed very dangerous at least, though he should not be a traitor. The young prince by degrees excluded this minister from the secret of affairs, and sought for pretences to remove him from about his person, yet without doing any thing to affront him openly. Soranes quickly perceived this change, and carried his resentment to the last extremities: he persuaded himself that Araspes was going to



he put in his place, that Cyrus intended to make himself absolute master in Persia, and that this was the prince's secret view in disciplining his troops with so much exactness. The jealousy and ambition of Soranes blinded him to such a degree, that he imagined he did his duty in practising the blackest treasons. He informed Cyaxares of all that passed in Persia; the augmentation of her forces, the preparations which were making for war, and Cyrus's design of extending his empire over all the East, under pretext of accomplishing certain pretended oracles by which he imposed upon the people. Cyaxares made advantage of these advices to alarm Astyages, and to insinuate uneasiness and distrust into his mind: Hytaspes was ordered away from the court of Ecbatan, and the emperor threatened Cambyses with a bloody war, if he did not consent to pay the ancient tribute, and return to the same dependence from which Persia had been set free, upon his marriage with Mandana: Cambyses's refusal was the signal of the war, and preparations were made on both sides (a).

In the mean while Soranes endeavoured to corrupt the chief officers of the army and weaken

(a) Xenophon has suppressed this war, but Herodotus and other historians mention it. See M. Freret's Letter.

their courage, by insinuating that Astyages was their lawful emperor, that the ambitious designs of Cyrus would ruin their country, and that they could never make head against the Median troops, who would overwhelm them with numbers. He continued likewise to increase the distrust of the senators, by artfully spreading a rumour among them, that Cyrus undertook this war against his grandfather, only to weaken their authority, and to usurp an absolute power. He concealed all his plots with such art, that it was almost impossible to discover them; every thing he said was with so much caution, that there was no seeing into his secret intentions; nay, there were certain moments in which he did not see them himself, but thought he was sincere and zealous for the public good: his first remorse returned from time to time, but he stifled them by persuading himself that the ill designs he imputed to the prince were real. Cyrus was quickly informed of the murmurs of the people: the army was ready to revolt, it was doubtful whether the senate would give the necessary subsidies, and the emperor of the Medes was upon the point of entering Persia at the head of sixty thousand men: the prince was in the greatest grief to see the cruel extremities to which

his father was reduced, and the necessity of taking arms against his grandfather.

Cambyfes observing the prince's struggles between nature and duty, said to him, You now, my son, all that I have done to stifle the first seeds of our differences : I have labour'd to no purpose : the war is inevitable : our country ought to be preferred to our family : hitherto you have assisted me in business by your prudence, you must now give proofs of your courage : would my age allow me to appear at the head of our troops, yet my presence would be necessary here to keep the people in awe : go, my son, go and fight for your country ; shew yourself the defender of its liberty, as well as the preserver of its laws : second the designs of heaven, render yourself worthy to accomplish its oracles ; begin by delivering Persia before you think of extending your conquests : let the nations see the effects of your courage, and admire your moderation in the midst of your triumphs, that they may not hereafter fear your victories. Cyrus, encouraged by the magnanimous sentiments of Cambyfes, and aided by the counsels of Harpagus and Hystaspes, two generals of equal experience, formed an army of thirty thousand men, composed of commanders, with whose fidelity

he was well acquainted, and veteran troops of known bravery. As soon as all preparations were made, they began by sacrifices and other religious rites. Cyrus after this drew up his troops in a spacious plain near the capital, addressed the senate and the Satrapes, and with a sweet and majestic air thus harangued the officers of his army.

War is not lawful when it is not necessary: that which we at present undertake is not to satisfy ambition or the desire of domination, but to defend our liberties: it is true our enemies understand military discipline, and they surpass us in number; but they are softened by luxury and a long peace: your souls are full of that noble ardour which makes men despise death when they are to fight for liberty: your severe life has accustomed you to fatigue: nothing is impossible to those whom no sufferings nor difficult enterprizes can dishearten: as for me, I will distinguish myself from you in nothing but in leading the way thro' labours and dangers: all our prosperities and all our misfortunes shall hereafter be common. He then turned to the senators, and with a fierce and severe countenance said, Cambyfes is not ignorant of the intrigues at the court of Ecbatan, to sow jealousy and distrust in your

ends: he knows that you hesitate about giving him subsidies, but having foreseen the war, he has taken his precautions, one battle will decide the fate of Persia, he does not want your assistance: however, remember that the liberty of your country is at present in question: is not this liberty more secure in the hands of my father your lawful prince, than in those of the emperor of the Medes, who holds all the neighbouring kings in a tributary dependence? If Cambyfes should be vanquished, your privileges are lost for ever; if he prove victorious, they will be preserved to you, unless you force the justice of a prince, whom you have incensed by your secret cabals, to deprive you of them. The prince by this discourse intimidated some, confirmed others in their duty, and united all in one design of contributing to the preservation of their country. Soranes appeared more zealous than any, and earnestly requested to have some command in the army: but as Cyrus had not concealed from Cambyfes his just suspicions of that minister, the king did not suffer himself to be imposed upon by appearances: under pretext of providing for the security of the capital, he kept him near his person, but gave orders to watch his conduct; so that Soranes was a prisoner without perceiving it.

Cyrus having learnt that Astyages had marched his troops through the deserts of Ilatia, in order to enter Persia, prevented him by a most surprising diligence: he crossed over craggy mountains, the passes of which he secured, and gained the plains of Pasagarda by such routs as would have been impracticable to any other than an army accustomed to fatigue, and conducted by so active and vigilant a general. Cyrus seized the most advantageous posts, and encamped near a ridge of mountains which defended him on one side, fortifying himself on the other by a double intrenchment. Astyages quickly appeared, and encamped in the same plain near a lake, and the two armies continued in sight of each other for several days. Cyrus could not without great concern look forward to the consequences of a war against his grandfather, and therefore employed this time in sending to Astyages's camp a Satrap, named Artabasis, who spoke to the emperor in the following manner: Cyrus, your grandson, has an abhorrence of the war which he has been forced to undertake against you: he has neglected nothing to prevent it, nor will refuse any means to put an end to it: he is not deaf to the voice of nature, but he cannot sacrifice the liberty of



the Persians: he would willingly reconcile by an honourable treaty the love of his country with filial affection: he is in a condition to make war, but at the same time is not ashamed to ask peace. The emperor, still irritated by Cyaxares, persisted in his first resolution, and Artabafus returned without succeeding in his negotiation.

Cyrus seeing himself reduced to the necessity of hazarding a battle, and knowing of what importance it is, in affairs of war, to deliberate with many, to decide with few, and to execute with speed, assembled his principal officers and heard all their opinions: he then took his resolution, which he communicated only to Hytaspes and Harpagus. The day following he caused a rumour to be spread in the army of the enemy, that he intended to retire, not daring to engage with unequal forces. Before he left the camp, he ordered the usual sacrifices to be offered: he made libations of wine, and all the chief officers did the same: he gave for the word, *Mythras the conductor and saviour*, and then mounting his horse, commanded every man to his post. The soldiers cuirasses were composed of plates of iron of divers colours, and like the scales of fish; their casques were of brass, adorned with a great white fea-

ther; over their shields, made of willow twigs interwoven, hung their quivers; their darts were short, their bows long, their arrows made of canes, and their scymitars hung upon their right thighs. The royal standard was a golden eagle with its wings expanded: the kings of Persia have ever since had the same.

Cyrus decamped by night, and advanced in the plains of Pasagarda: Astyages, imagining that the prince fled before him, made haste to come up with him by sun-rising: Cyrus on a sudden drew up his army in order of battle, and only twelve deep, that the javelins and darts of the last rank might reach the enemy, and that all the parts might support and assist each other without confusion: he chose out of each battalion a select company, of which he formed a triangular Phalanx after the manner of the Greeks: he placed this body of reserve behind his army, commanding it not to stir till he himself should give express orders. The plain was covered with dust and sand, and the north-wind blew hard. Cyrus, by wheeling a little, posted his army so advantageously, that the rising dust was driven full in the faces of the Medes, and favoured his stratagem: Harpagus commanded the right wing, Hyaspes the left, Araspes the centre, and Cyrus

was present every where. The army of the Medes was composed of several square battalions thirty deep, all standing close to be the more impenetrable : in the front were the chariots, with great scythes fastened to the axletrees.

Cyrus ordered Harpagus and Hystaspes to extend the two wings by degrees, in order to enclose the Medes. While he was speaking he heard a clap of thunder : we follow thee, great Promazes, cried he, and in the same instant began the hymn of battle, to which all the troops answered with loud shouts, invoking the god Mythras. Cyrus's army presented its front in a strait line to deceive Astyages ; but the centre marching slower, and the wings faster, the whole was soon formed into a crescent. The Medes broke through the first ranks of the centre, and advanced to the last : they began already to cry, Victory ! but then Cyrus advanced with his body of reserve, while Harpagus and Hystaspes surrounded the enemy on all sides, and the battle was renewed. The triangular Phalanx of the Persians pierced the battalions of the Medes, and turned aside their chariots : Cyrus, mounted on a foaming steed, flew from rank to rank : the fire of his eyes animated the soldiers, and the serenity of his

countenance banished all fear: in the heat of battle he was active, calm and present to himself: he spoke to some, encouraged others by signs, and kept every one in his post. The Medes being surrounded on all sides, were attacked in front, in rear and in flank: the Persians close in upon them, and cut them in pieces: nothing was heard but the clashing of arms and the groans of the dying; streams of blood covered the plain: despair, rage and cruelty, spread slaughter and death every where: Cyrus alone felt a generous pity: Astyages and Cyaxares being taken prisoners, he gave orders to sound a retreat, and put an end to the battle.

Cyaxares inflamed with rage, and with all the passions that take hold of a proud mind, when fallen from its hopes, would not see Cyrus: he pretended to be wounded, and sent to ask permission to return to Ecbatan, to which Cyrus consented. Astyages was conducted with pomp to the capital of Persia, not like a conquered prince, but like a victorious one: being no longer importuned by the evil counsels of his son, he made a peace, and Persia was declared a free kingdom for ever: this was the first service that Cyrus did his country. The success of this war, so contrary to the expecta-

son of Soranes, opened his eyes. Had the event been answerable to his desires, he would still have continued in his perfidiousness; but finding that his projects were disconcerted, and that it was impossible to conceal them any longer, he shrunk with horror to behold the dreadful condition into which he had brought himself, the crimes he had committed, and the certain disgrace which would follow: not able to endure this prospect, he fell into despair, killed himself, and left a sad example to posterity of the excesses to which boundless ambition may carry the greatest geniuses, even when their hearts are not entirely corrupted. After his death Cyrus was informed of all the particulars of his treachery. The prince, without applauding himself for having early seen into the character of this minister, beheld with concern, and lamented the unhappy condition of man, who often loses all the fruits of his talents, and sometimes precipitates himself into the greatest crimes, by giving way to an unbridled imagination and a blind passion.

As soon as the peace was concluded, Astyages returned into his own dominions. After his departure, Cyrus assembled the senators, magistrates, and all the heads of the people, and said to them, in the name of the king: My

father's arms have set Persia free from all foreign dependence. He might now, with a victorious army at his devotion, destroy your privileges, and govern with absolute authority; but he abhors such maxims: it is only under the empire of Arimanius that force alone presides; princes are the images of the great Oromazes, and ought to imitate his conduct; his sovereign reason is the rule of his will: how wise and just soever princes may be, they are still but men, and consequently have prejudices and passions; nay, were they exempt from these, they cannot see and hear every thing; they have need of faithful counsellors to inform and assist them. 'Tis thus that Cambyfes resolves to govern; he will reserve no more power than is necessary to do good, and chuses to have such restraints as may hinder him from doing ill: senators, banish your fears, lay aside your distrusts; recognize your king: he preserves all your rights to you: assist him in making the Persians happy: he desires to reign over free children, and not over slaves. At these words joy was diffused through the whole assembly. Some cried out, Is not this the god Mythras himself come down from the empyreum to renew the reign of Oromazes? Others, dissolved in tears, were unable to speak.



The old men looked on him as their son, the young men called him father: all Persia seemed but one family. It was thus that Cyrus avoided all the snares of Soranes, triumphed over the plots of Cyaxares, and restored liberty to the Persians: he never had recourse to cowardly artifice, or mean dissimulation unworthy of great souls.

Astyages died soon after his return to Ecba-  
tan, and left the empire to Cyaxares. Cam-  
byfes foreseeing that the turbulent and jealous  
spirit of that prince would soon excite new dis-  
turbances, resolved to seek an alliance with  
the Assyrians. The emperor of Media and the  
king of Babylon had been for an hundred years  
all the two rival powers of the east; they  
were continually endeavouring to weaken each  
other in order to become masters of Asia.  
Cambyfes, who knew his son's abilities, pro-  
posed to him that he should go in person to  
the court of Nabuchodonosor, to treat with A-  
mytis, the wife of that prince, and sister of  
Mandana; she governed the kingdom during  
the king's madness. Cyrus had been hindered  
from going thither some years before by his  
mother's sickness: he was exceedingly pleased  
with a journey to Babylon, not only that he  
might serve his country, but that he might

likewise have an opportunity of conversing with the Hebrews, whose oracles (as he had learned from Zoroaster) contained predictions of his future greatness; and he had no less desire to see the miserable condition of king Nabuchodonosor, the report of which was spread over all the east. Having filled the council and senate with men of approved loyalty and capacity, he left Persia, crossed Susiana, and soon arrived at Babylon.

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EIGHTH BOOK.

**B**ABYLON, the seat of the Assyrian monarch, had been founded by Semiramis, but Nabuchodonosor had given it its principal beauties. This conqueror after long and difficult wars, finding himself in perfect tranquility, applied his thoughts to make his capital one of the wonders of the world. It was situate on a vast plain, watered by the Euphrates; the canals cut from this river made the fruitfulness of the soil so great, (*a*) that it yielded the king as much

(*a*) See Herod. lib. 1. Diod. Sic. lib. 2. Q. Curt. lib. 5. and Prideaux.

as the half of his empire. The walls of the city were built of large brick, cemented together with bitumen, or a slime rising out of the earth, which in time became harder than marble; they were fifty cubits thick, two hundred high, and formed a perfect square twenty leagues in compass; an hundred and fifty towers, raised at certain distances upon these inaccessible walls, commanded all the country round about; an hundred gates of brass regularly disposed opened to an innumerable multitude of people of all nations; fifty great streets traversed the city from side to side, and by crossing each other formed above six hundred large divisions, in which were stately palaces, delightful gardens and magnificent squares. The Euphrates flowed through the middle of Babylon, and over that river, was a bridge built with surprising art; at its two extremities were two palaces, the old one to the east, the new one to the west; near the old palace was the temple of Belus, from the center of this building rose a pyramid six hundred feet high, and composed of eight towers one above another; from the top of this pyramid the Babylonians observed the motions of the stars, which was their favourite study, and by which they made themselves famous in other nations. At the

At the other end of the bridge stood the new palace, which was eight miles in circuit; its famous hanging gardens, which were so many large terraces one above another, rose like an amphitheatre to the height of the city walls; the whole mass was supported by divers arches built upon other arches, all covered with broad stones strongly cemented, and over them was first a layer of reed mixed with bitumen, then two rows of bricks, and over these thick sheets of lead, which made the whole impenetrable to rain or any moisture: the mould which covered all was of that depth as to have room enough for the greatest trees to take root in it; in these gardens were long walks, which ran as far as the eye could reach: bowers, green plots and flowers of all kinds; canals, basins and aqueducts to water and adorn this place of delights; a most surprising collection of all the beauties of nature and art.

The author or rather the creator of so many prodigies, equal to Hercules in bravery, and superior to the greatest men by his genius, was after incredible successes, fallen into a kind of madness; he imagined himself transformed into a beast, and had all the fierceness of one. As soon as Cyrus was arrived at Babylon, he went to see queen Amytis: this princess had

for near seven years been plunged in a deep sadness; but she was beginning to moderate her grief, because the Hebrews, who were then captives in the city, had promised her that the king should be cured in a few days. The queen was waiting that happy moment with great impatience: the wonders she had seen performed by Daniel made her confide in what he said. Cyrus, from a respectful consideration of the affliction of Amytis, avoided speaking to her concerning the principal design of his journey; he was sensible that it was not a favourable conjuncture to treat of political affairs, and waited for the king's cure, though with little hopes: in the mean while he endeavoured to satisfy his curiosity touching the religion and manners of the Israelites. Daniel was not then at Babylon, but was gone to visit and console the Hebrews dispersed throughout Assyria. Amytis made Cyrus acquainted with an illustrious Hebrew named Eleazer: the prince being informed that the people of God did not look upon the king's frenzy as a natural distemper, but as a punishment from heaven, desired the Hebrew philosopher to tell him the reason of it.

Nabuchodonosor, says the Hebrew Sage, being led away by impious men who were about



him, came at length to such an excess of irreligion, that he blasphemed against *The most High*; and to crown his impiety, he erected a golden statue of an enormous size in the plain of Dura, and commanded that it should be adored by all the nations he had subdued. He was admonished by divine dreams, that he should be punished for his idolatry and pride in this life: a Hebrew named Daniel, a man famous for science, virtue and his knowledge of futurity, explained to him those dreams, and denounced God's judgments which were ready to fall upon him. The words of the prophet made at first some impression upon the king's mind: but being surrounded by prophane men who despised the heavenly powers, he neglected the divine admonition, and gave himself up anew to his impiety. At the end of the year, while he was walking in his gardens, admiring the beauty of his own works, the splendor of his glory, and the greatness of his empire, he exalted himself above humanity, and became an idolator of his own proud imaginations. He heard a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nabuchodonosor, to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men, and thou shalt eat grass as the beasts of the field till seven years are passed,

until thou know that *The Most High* ruleth over all the kingdoms of the universe, and giveth them to whomsoever he will. In the same hour was the thing fulfilled and his reason was taken from him; he was seized with a frenzy and with fits of raging madness; in vain they attempted to hold him by chains; he broke all his irons and ran away into the mountains and plains; roaring like a lion; no one can approach him without running the hazard of being torn in pieces. He had no repose nor intervals of reason except one day in the week, which is the Sabbath (*b*); he then holds discourses which should strike the impious with terror. It is now almost seven years that he has been in this condition, and we are expecting his total recovery in a few days, according to the divine prediction.

Here Cyrus sighed, and could not forbear saying, In all the countries through which I pass, I see nothing but sad examples of the weakness and misfortunes of princes: in Egypt Apries suffers himself to be made a sacrifice by his blind friendship for a perfidious favourite: at Sparta two young kings were going to ruin

(*b*) See Megast. and Abyden. quoted by Josephus Ant. lib. 10. cap. 11. and by Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. 9. cap. 41.

the state, if not prevented by the wisdom of Chilo; the deplorable fate of Periander and his whole family at Corinth will be a dreadful example to posterity of the miseries which tyrants and usurpers draw upon themselves; at Athens Pisistratus is twice dethroned; Polycratus king of Samos suffers himself to be imposed upon so far as to persecute innocence; in Crete the successors of Minos have destroyed the most perfect of all governments; here Nabuchodonosor draws upon himself the wrath of heaven by his impiety: Great Oromazes! was it only in your anger then that you gave kings to mortals? Are grandeur and virtue incompatible.

The morning of the Sabbath, Cyrus accompanied by Eleazar, went to the place where the king of Babylon frequented; they beheld the unfortunate prince come out of the Euphrates, and lie down under some willows which were upon the banks of the river. They approached him in silence: he was stretched upon the grass with his eyes turned towards heaven: from time to time he sent forth deep sighs, accompanied with bitter tears; in the midst of his misfortunes there was still upon his face an air of greatness, which sheweth that THE MOST HIGH in punishing had not entirely forsaken him: they forbore out of respect to speak.

to him, or to interrupt the profound grief in which he seemed to be plunged. Cyrus deeply struck with the sad situation of this great prince stood immoveable, and on his countenance appeared all the tokens of a soul seized with terror and compassion: the king of Babylon observed it, and without knowing who he was said to him: Heaven suffers me to have intervals of reason; to make me sensible that I do not possess it as a property; that it comes from another; that a superior Being takes it from me and restores it when he pleases; and that he who gives it me is a sovereign Intelligence, who holds all nature in his hand, and can dispose it in order or overturn it according to his pleasure. Heretofore being blinded by pride and corrupted by prosperity, I said within myself, and to all the false friends who were about me; We are born as it were by chance, and after death we shall be as if we had never been; the soul is a spark of fire which goes out when the body is reduced to ashes; come, let us enjoy the present good, let us make haste to exhaust all pleasures; let us drink the most delicious wines, and perfume ourselves with odoriferous oils; let us crown ourselves with roses before they wither; let strength be our only law, and pleasure the rule of our duty; let us

make the just fall into our snares, because he  
honours us by his virtue; let us examine him  
with affronts and torments, that we may see  
whether he be sincere. Thus it was that I  
blasphemed against Heaven, and this is the  
source of my miseries; alas: I have but too  
much deserved them. Scarce had he pronoun-  
ed these words, when he started up ran away,  
and hid himself in the neighbouring forest.

The words of Nabuchodonosor augmented  
the young prince's respect for the Deity, and  
redoubled his desire of being fully instructed  
in the religion of the Hebrews; he frequently  
saw Eleazar, and by degrees contracted a close  
friendship with him. The Eternal being  
watchful over Cyrus, whom he had chosen to  
bring about the deliverance of his people,  
thought fit to prepare him by his conversation  
with the Hebrew sage, to receive soon after the  
instructions of the prophet Daniel. Ever since  
the captivity of the Israelites, the Hebrew doc-  
tors who were dispersed in the several nations,  
had applyed themselves to the study of the pro-  
fane sciences, and endeavoured to reconcile re-  
ligion with philosophy: in order thereto they  
embraced or forsook the literal sense of the sa-  
cred books, according as it suited with their  
notions, or was repugnant to them: they

taught that the Hebrew traditions were often folded up in allegories, according to the Eastern custom; but they pretended to explain them, and this was what gave rise afterwards to that famous sect among the Hebrews called the Allegorists. Eleazer was of the number of those philosophers, and was with reason esteemed one of the greatest geniuses of his age; he was versed in all the sciences of the Chaldeans and Egyptians, and had held several disputes with the Eastern magi, to prove that the religion of the Hebrews was not only the most ancient, but the most conformable to reason. Cyrus having divers times discoursed with Eleazer upon all he had learned in Persia, Egypt and Greece concerning the great revolutions which had happened in the universe, desired him one day to explain to him the doctrine of the Hebrew philosophers, concerning the three states of the world.

(b) We adore, answered Eleazar, but only God, infinite, eternal, immense: he has defined himself, HE WHO IS, to denote that he exists of himself, and that all other beings exist only by him: being rich by the riches of his own nature, and happy by his own supreme felicity, he had no need to produce other sub-

(c) See the Disc.



ances to augment his glory; nevertheless, by noble and free effort of his beneficent will, he has created divers orders of intelligences to make them happy. Man first forms the plan of his work before he executes it; but THE ETERNAL conceives, produces and disposes every thing in order, by the same act, without labour or succession: he thinks, and immediately all the possible ways of representing himself outwardly appear before him; a world of ideas presents itself to the intellect. He wills, and instantly real things resembling those ideas exist in his immensity: the whole universe and the vast expanse of nature, distinct from the divine Essence is produced. The Creator has presented himself two ways, by simple pictures, and by living images. Hence there are two sorts of creatures essentially different, material nature and intelligent nature; the one presents only some perfections of its original, the other knows and enjoys it; there are an infinite number of spheres full of such intelligent beings. Sometimes these spirits plunge themselves in the unfathomable depths of the divine nature to adore its beauties, which are ever new; at other times they admire the perfections of the Creator in his works; this is their chief happiness: they cannot incessantly

contemplate the splendor of the divine Essence; their weak and finite nature requires that they should sometimes veil their eyes; this is the reason why the material world was created, the refreshment of the intellectual.

Two sorts of spirits lost this happiness by their disloyalty; the one called Cherubim, were of a superior order, and are now infernal spirits; the other called Ischim, were of a less perfect nature; these are the souls which actually inhabit mortal bodies. The chief of the Cherubim approached nearer the throne than the other spirits; he was crowned with the most excellent gifts of THE MOST HIGH, but lost his wisdom by a vain complacency in himself: being enamoured with his own beauty, he beheld and considered himself, and was dazzled with the lustre of his own light; he grew proud, rebelled, and drew into his rebellion the greater part of the genii of his order. The Ischim became too much attached to material objects, and in the enjoyment of created pleasures, forgot the supreme beatitude of spirits; the first were too much elated with pride, the second debased themselves by sensuality. Upon this there happened a great revolution in the heavens; the sphere of the Cherubim became a dark chaos, where those unhappy intelligences

Deplore, without consolation, their lost felicity. The Ischim being less guilty, because they had sinned through weakness, were less severely punished: that they might forget their former state, God suffered them to fall into a kind of lethargy or fatal insensibility, from which they awake only to enter successively into mortal bodies: the organic moulds of all human bodies were shut up in that of Adam, and the order of generation was established; each soul awakens in such a body, and in such time, place and circumstances as suit best with the decrees of eternal Wisdom: the earth changed its form, it was no longer a garden of delights, but a place of banishment and misery, where the continual war of the elements subjected men to diseases and death. This is the hidden meaning of the great Hebrew law-giver, when he speaks of the terrestrial paradise, and of the fall of our first parents. Adam does not represent one single man, but all mankind. (f) Every nation hath its allegories, and we have ours: those who do not comprehend them look upon our history of the forbidden fruit and of the speaking serpent as fables more absurd than the mythology of the Persians, Egyptians and Greeks concerning the fall of Arimanius the

(f) See Disc

rebellion of Typhon, and the golden apples in the garden of Hesperides: all these allegories are founded upon the same tradition more or less disguised. The weak and ignorant in every religion stick to the letter which kills, and the impious scoff at it; but neither the one nor the other understand the spirit which gives life.

Souls being once disunited from their origin had no longer any fixed principle of union; the order of generation, mutual wants and self-love became here below the only bonds of our transient society, and took the place of justice, friendship and the love of order, which unite the heavenly spirits. Divers other changes happened in this mortal abode, suitable to the state of the souls who suffer, and deserve to suffer, and are to be cured by their sufferings. In the end the great Prophet, whom we call the MESSIAH, will come and restore order in the universe: it is he who is the head, and the conductor of all intelligent natures; he is the first-born of all creatures; the Deity united himself to him in an intimate manner from the beginning of time, and he was united himself to a portion of matter which serves him for a tabernacle; from this luminous centre incessantly stream rays that enlighten all the regions of immensity; this glorious body is the sun of

the heavenly Jerusalem; the emanations of this adorable SHECHINAH are the life and light of all bodies, as those of his Divinity are the reason and happiness of all intelligences: it was this Messiah who conversed with our fathers under a human form: it was he who appeared to our law-giver upon the holy mount; it was he who spoke to the prophets under a visible appearance; it is he who will at last come in triumph upon the clouds, to restore the universe to its primitive splendor and felicity. How august a thing is religion, how worthy of God, how sublime in its simplicity, when the veil which hides it from profane eyes is removed!

Cyrus transported with these sublime ideas could by no means interrupt the philosopher; but seeing that he had done speaking he said: I find that your theology is perfectly conformable to the doctrine of the Persians, Egyptians and Greeks, concerning the three states of the world. Zoroaster being versed in the sciences of the gymnosophists, spoke to me of the empire of Oromazes before the rebellion of Ariamanus, as of a state in which all spirits were happy and perfect: in Egypt the religion of Hermes represents the reign of Osiris, before the monster Typhon broke through the

mundane egg, as a state exempt from miseries and passions: Orpheus has sung the golden age as a state of simplicity and innocence. Each nation has formed an idea of this primitive world according to its genius; the magi, who are all astronomers, have placed it in the stars; the Egyptians, who are all philosophers, have fancied it a republic of sages; the Greeks, who delight in rural scenes, have described it as a country of shepherds. I farther observe that the traditions of all nations foretel the coming of a hero, who is to descend from heaven to bring back Astræa to the earth: the Persians call him Mythras, the Egyptians Ormuz, the Tyrians Adonis, the Greeks Apollo, Hercules, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter the Conductor and Saviour. It is true they differ in their descriptions, but all agree in the same truths; they are all sensible that man is not now what he was, and believe that he will one day assume a more perfect form: God cannot suffer an eternal blemish in his work; evil had a beginning and it will have an end; then will be the triumph of light over darkness; that is the time fixed by destiny for the total destruction of Typhon, Arimanius and Pluto, the prescribed period in all religions for re-establishing the reign of Oromazes, Osiris, Belus, and Saturn.



Nevertheless there arises one great difficulty, which no philosopher has yet been able to solve. I do not conceive how evil could happen under the government of a God who is good, wise and powerful; if he be wise, he might have foreseen it; if he be powerful, he might have hindered it; and if he be good, he would have prevented it: shew me which way to justify the eternal Wisdom; why has God created free beings, intelligences capable of evil? why has he bestowed on them so fatal a gift? Liberty, answered Eleazer, is a necessary consequence of our reasonable nature. To be free is to be able to choose; to choose is to prefer: every being capable of reasoning and comparing can prefer, and consequently choose. It is true, every choice we necessarily chuse what appears to us the best, but we can suspend our choice till we have examined whether the good that presents itself be a real good or only an apparent one: the soul is not free to see or not to see the objects she looks upon, to discern or not to discern their differences when she sees them, or to choose without a reason for choosing; but she is free to look or not look, to consider objects on one side only or on several, to choose them for a good or for a bad reason: we are never invincibly captivated by any finite good,

because we are able to think of a greater good, and so may discover a superior charm which will carry us away from the less attractive object; and it is on this activity natural to all rational beings that liberty depends: spirits only are active and capable of self-motion: God gives them activity as well as being; an activity different from his, as well as a substance distinct from his. One of the essential differences between bodies and souls is this, the one are necessarily transported wherever the moving power carries them, the other suffer themselves to be moved only by the reason that enlightens them. God could not give us intelligence without giving us liberty.

But could he not, replied Cyrus, have hindered us from abusing our liberty, by shewing us truth with so clear an evidence, that it would have been impossible to mistake? when the sovereign Beauty displays his infinitely attractive charms, they seize and engross the whole will, and make all inferior amiableness vanish, as the rising sun dispels the shades of night. The purest light, answered Eleazer, does not illuminate those who will not see; now every finite intelligence may turn away his eyes from the truth. I have already told you that spirits cannot incessantly contemplate

the splendors of the divine Essence; they are obliged from time to time to cover their faces; it is then that self-love may seduce them and make them take an apparent good for a real one; this false good may dazzle them and draw them away from the true good. Self-love is inseparable from our nature. God in loving himself essentially loves order, because HE IS ORDER; but the creature may love itself without loving order; to what degree of perfection soever we suppose it raised, it is still finite, and consequently capable of pursuing, contrary to the will of the Creator, a good which it has not in its possession; hence every created spirit is necessarily and essentially fallible: to ask why God has made fallible intelligences, is to ask why he has made them finite, or why he has not created gods as perfect as himself; a thing impossible.

Cannot God, continued Cyrus, employ his Almighty power, to force free intelligences to see and relish truth? Under the empire of God himself, answered Eleazer, despotic rule and liberty are incompatible. God does every thing he pleases in heaven and upon earth; but he will not employ his absolute power to destroy the free nature of intelligent beings; if he did, they would act no longer from choice but ne-

cessity; they would obey, but they would not love: now love is what God demands, and it is the only worship worthy of him; he does not require it for any advantage to himself, but for the good of his creatures; he will have them happy and contribute to their own happiness; happy by love, and by love of pure choice: it is thus that their merit augments their felicity.

But could not the Deity, said Cyrus, have employed infallible means to secure the happiness of intelligent beings, without violating their liberty; has he not a sovereign dominion over spirits as well as bodies? can he not change the most rebellious and stubborn wills, and make them pliable and submissive to his orders? in a word, could he not have found expedients in the inexhaustible treasures of his power, wisdom and goodness, to subject free agents as well as necessary ones to his eternal purposes? Doubtless, answered Eleazar, we cannot form too high an idea of the perfections of the infinitely perfect Being; he wills the happiness of all intelligences, knows all the means requisite to accomplish his will, and sooner or later will render those means absolutely and infallibly efficacious without violating the liberty of spirits. The permission of sin, expiatory pains, and all the fatal conse-

Consequences of our rebellion, are part of those means and of the plan of his adorable providence. God first exerted all the efforts of his power, he exhausted, so to speak, all the treasures of his wisdom, he displayed all the charms of his goodness, he neglected nothing to prevent the fall of spirits. Seeing at last that he could not keep them in the love of order, without violating their liberty, he left them for a moment to the fatal consequences of their wanderings, because he knew how to make all end in the accomplishment of his decrees. He who calls being out of nothing can draw an infinite good from a transient evil, order from confusion, the universal beauty of his work from a slight blemish which he suffers in it, and the permanent happiness of all spirits from the momentaneous pains which a small number of intelligences suffer by their own fault. All the heavenly hosts are spectators of what passes here below, and are confirmed for ever in the love of order, by seeing the terrible effects and natural consequences of our unfaithfulness. This is the reason why God suffers evil for a moment; our example is an eternal lesson to all spirits. The conduct of God offends us only because we are finite and mortal: we see not the whole plan of it, we judge of it only by

small pieces. Let us raise our thoughts above this place of banishment, let us run over all the celestial regions, we shall see disorder and evil no where but in this corner of the universe. The earth is but an atom in comparison of immensity; the whole extent of time is but a moment in respect of eternity: these two infinitely small points will one day disappear; yet a little moment and evil will be no more; but our limited minds and our self-love magnify objects, and make us look upon that point which divides the two eternities as something great.

Could not the infinite goodness of God, said Cyrus, have brought back his offending creatures to order without making them suffer? a good father will never make use of punishments when he can gain his children by mildness.

I have already told you, answered Eleazar, that we are capable of a twofold happiness: should God, after our rebellion, continue to us the full enjoyment of created pleasure, we should never aspire to an union with the Creator; we should content ourselves with an inferior happiness, without any endeavours to attain to the supreme beatitude of our nature. The only means to hinder free beings from re-



passing into disorder, is to make them feel for  
time the fatal consequences of their error.  
God owes it to his justice to punish the guilty,  
that he may not countenance crimes; and his  
goodness likewise requires it, in order to cor-  
rect and reform the criminal. Natural evil is  
necessary to cure moral evil; suffering is the  
only remedy for sin. All will suffer more or  
less in proportion as they are more or less gone  
astray: those who have never departed from  
their duty, will for ever excell the rest in know-  
ledge and in happiness; those who delay their  
return to it, will be always inferior to the o-  
ther in perfection and felicity. The return of  
spirits to their first principle, resembles the mo-  
tion of bodies towards their centre; the near-  
er they approach to it, the more their velocity  
augments, and consequently those who begin  
sooner to return to their infinite centre will  
for ever outstrip the rest in their course. This  
is the order established by eternal Wisdom, the  
immutable law of distributive justice, from  
which God cannot deviate, without being es-  
sentially wanting to himself, countenancing re-  
bellion, and exposing all finite and fallible be-  
ings to the danger of disturbing universal har-  
mony. You see in all this the conduct of a God,  
of a Creator who drew spirits out of nothing

to make them happy, he punishes them that they may return into order, he suspends the exercise of his absolute power, that by the secret springs of an immutable wisdom, goodness and justice, he may make them accomplish freely his eternal purposes.

I comprehend you, said Cyrus; God could not deprive us of liberty without depriving us of intelligence; nor hinder us from being sensible without making us infinite, nor prevent our wandering without destroying our liberty, nor dispense us from expiatory pains without violating his justice and goodness: exempt from all passions, he has neither anger nor revenge, he chastises only to amend, he punishes only to cure, he permits sin only that he may not violate our liberty, he is tender of that liberty only that he makes us merit, he exacts that merit only to augment our happiness, he does not employ his almighty power to force us to be happy, because he will give us the eternal pleasure of contributing to our own happiness by love, and by a love of pure choice; he does good for the love of good, without having any need of our services, without gaining any thing by our virtues, or losing any thing by our crimes. Such is the glory of the God of the Hebrews, of HIM WHO IS, of the inde-

dependent and self-sufficient Being. No philosopher ever presented me before with a chain of principles and consequences, thoughts and sentiments, so worthy of eternal Nature, so consoling to man, and so conformable to reason.

This, continued Eleazar, is what even the understanding of man can suggest to render the ways of God intelligible : it is thus that we confound reason by reason itself ; it is by these principles that our doctors silence the philosophers of the Gentiles, who blaspheme against the sovereign Wisdom, because of the evils and crimes which happen here below. But yet our religion does not consist in these speculations ; it is not so much a philosophical system as a supernatural establishment ; Daniel will instruct you in this ; he is at this time the prophet of *The Most High* : the Eternal often shews him futurity as present, and lends him his power to work prodigies ; he is soon to return to Babylon, he will shew you the oracles contained in our sacred books, and teach you what are the purposes for which God intends you. It was in this manner that the Hebrew Philosopher instructed Cyrus, vainly striving to fathom the unsearchable depths of divine wisdom ; what was defective in his opinions, was set right by the more simple and sublime instructions of Da-

niel, who came back to Babylon a few days after.

It was the time fixed by the prophets for the recovery of Nabuchodonosor, his frenzy ceased, and his reason was restored to him. Before he returned to his capital, he resolved to pay a public homage to the God of Israel in the same place where he had given the notorious instance of his impiety. He ordered Daniel to assemble the princes, magistrates, governors of provinces, and all the nobles of Babylon, and to conduct them to the plains of Dura, where he had some years before erected the famous golden statue. Cloathed with his imperial robe, he mounted upon an eminence, from whence he might be seen by all people; he had no longer any thing fierce or savage in his look; notwithstanding the dreadful condition to which his sufferings had reduced him, his countenance had a serene and majestic air: he turned towards the east, took off his diadem, prostrated himself with his face to the earth, and pronounced three times the tremendous name of *Jehovah*! Having adored the *Eternal* for some time in a profound silence, he rose up and said: People of all nations assembled together, it was here that you formerly beheld the extravagant marks of my

Book VI  
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impious and abominable pride : it was here  
that I usurped the rights of the Divinity, and  
would force you to worship the work of mens  
hands : *The Most High*, to punish this excess  
of irreligion, condemned me to eat grafs with  
the beasts for seven whole years : the times are  
accomplished : I have lifted up my eyes to hea-  
ven, and acknowledged the power of the God  
of Israel ; my reason and my understanding  
are restored me. Your God (continued he,  
turning towards Daniel) is in truth the God  
of gods and King of kings. All the inhabitants  
of the earth are before him as nothing, and he  
does according to his will both in heaven and  
on earth ; his wisdom is equal to his power,  
and all his ways are full of justice : those that  
walk in pride he is able to abase, and he raises  
again those whom he had humbled : O princes  
and people, learn to render homage to his  
greatness ! At these words the assembly sent  
up shouts of joy, and filled the air with accla-  
mations in honour of the God of Israel. Na-  
buchodonosor was conducted back with pomp  
to his capital, and resumed the government of  
his kingdom : He raised Daniel to the highest  
dignities, and the Hebrews were honoured with  
the first posts throughout all the provinces of  
his empire.

Some days after, Amytis presented Cyrus to Nabuchodonosor, who received the young prince in a most friendly manner, and gave him a favourable audience: however, the nobles of Babylon, who sat in the king's council, represented in very strong terms, that it might be dangerous to provoke the Median court at the present juncture, when the forces of the kingdom were much lessened, and its treasures exhausted by the late troubles during the king's illness; and that it would be better policy to foment the divisions between the Medes and Persians, in order to make them mutually weaken each other, and so give the king of Babylon a fair occasion of extending his conquests. But Nabuchodonosor, who by the misfortunes he had suffered was cured of all such false maxims, did not go into these ambitious projects of his ministers; and Cyrus observing his good dispositions, took that opportunity to lay before him the advantages he might find by an alliance with Cambyfes: he made the king sensible that the Medes were the only rivals of his power in the East; that it could not be for his interest to let them grow more considerable, by subjecting and oppressing the Persians; but that he should rather make the latter his friend, who might serve as a barrier to his empire a-



ainst the enterprizes of the Median prince; and lastly, that Persia lay very convenient for the Babylonian troops to march through it into Media, in case Cyaxares should resolve upon a rupture. The prince of Persia spoke both in public and private assemblies with so much eloquence and strength of reason; he shewed during the course of his negociation, which lasted some months, so much candour and truth, he managed the nobles with so much prudence and delicacy, that in the end he brought them all over: an alliance was sworn in a solemn manner, and Nabuchodonosor continued faithful to it the rest of his life.

Cyrus, impatient to see the sacred books of the Hebrews, which contained oracles relating to his future greatness, conversed every day with Daniel; and the prophet gladly embraced the opportunity to instruct him in the Hebrew religion. He at length opened the books of Isaiah, who had prophesied of Cyrus by name an hundred and fifty years before his birth, and the prince read there these words: ' Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus; whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, and put kings to flight; and I will open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will

' go before thee, I will humble the great ones  
 ' of the earth, I will break in pieces the gates  
 ' of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron,  
 ' and I will reveal to thee the hidden treasures,  
 ' and the secret of secrets (a), that thou may-  
 ' est know that I the Lord, who have called  
 ' thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.  
 ' For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine  
 ' elect, I have even called thee by thy name, I  
 ' have surnamed thee, though thou hast not  
 ' known me. I am the Lord, and there is none  
 ' else, there is no God besides me.—I form the  
 ' light and create darkness.—I have made the  
 ' earth and created man upon it, I, even my  
 ' hands, have stretched out the heavens, and  
 ' all their host have I commanded. I have  
 ' raised him up in righteousness, and I will di-  
 ' rect all his ways; he shall build my city, and  
 ' he shall let go my captives, not for price nor  
 ' reward, saith the Lord of hosts.'

Cyrus was struck with awe and reverence as  
 well as astonishment, to see so clear and cir-  
 cumstantial a prediction, a thing unknown in  
 other nations; for there the oracles were al-  
 ways obscure and ambiguous. Eleazar (said  
 he to the prophet) has already shewn me, that  
 the great principles of your theology concern-

(a) Arcana Secretorum, Isaiah xiv. 3 vulg.

ing the three states of the world agree with those of other nations. He has removed all my difficulties about the origin of evil, by proving the freedom of intelligent natures: he shuts the mouth of impiety by his sublime ideas concerning the pre-existence of souls, their voluntary fall, and their total restoration: but he has said nothing to me of the supernatural establishment of your law. I conjure you, by the God whom you adore, to answer my questions: Has your tradition the same source with that of other nations? Has it been transmitted to you by a purer channel? Was your lawgiver a mere philosopher, or a divine person?

I know, answered Daniel, the endeavours which our doctors use, to accommodate religion to the taste of the philosophers; but they are all bewildered and lost in a crowd of uncertain opinions: who can find out the ways of God, or penetrate into his secret purposes? Our thoughts are weak, and our conjectures vain; the body, this earthly tabernacle, depresses the soul, and will not suffer it to reach those heights to which it fondly aspires. It is certain that God has permitted evil only that we might draw from it an infinite good; but how he will accomplish his purpose is a secret.

hidden from the eyes of mortals. All the systems that can be imagined are either dangerous or defective. The curiosity of seeing into every thing, explaining every thing, and adjusting it to our imperfect notions, is the most fatal disease of the human mind. The most sublime act of our feeble reason is to keep itself silent before the sovereign reason; let us leave to God the care of justifying one day the incomprehensible ways of his providence. Our pride and our impatience will not suffer us to wait for this unravelling; we would go before the light, and by so doing we lose the use of it.

(a) 'Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker, unto him who is but clay and a potsherd of the earth.' Forget therefore all the refined speculations of the philosophers. I shall speak to you a more sure and simple language; I shall propose nothing to you but such truths as are supported by the universal tradition of all nations, or else palpable facts, of which the eyes, ears, and all the senses of men, are judges.

The Eternal created our first parents in a state of innocence, happiness and immortality, but the ambitious desire of increasing their knowledge, and of being as gods, carried them to disobey the orders of *The Most High*: they

(a) Isaiah xiv.

were driven from their habitation of delights, and their whole race was involved in their punishment, as it had been in their crime: thus we were degraded in our origin, and blasted in our source. When mankind discontinued to be just, they ceased to be immortal; sufferings followed close upon crimes, and men were condemned to a state of pain and misery, in order to make them aspire perpetually after a better life. For the first ages after the fall, religion was not written; the moral part of it was found in reason itself, and the mysteries of it were transmitted by tradition from the ancients. As men lived then several ages, it was easy to preserve that tradition in its purity. But the sublime knowledge of the first men having served only to make them the more criminal, the whole race of mankind, except the family of Noah, was destroyed, in order to stop the course of impiety and the increase of vice: the fountains of the great abyss were broken up, and the waters covered the earth with an universal deluge, of which there yet are some traces in the traditions of all nations, and of which we see every day convincing proofs, when we dig into the bowels of the earth. The constitution of the world, which

had suffered by the fall, was impaired anew <sup>(b)</sup>; the juices of the earth were impoverished and spoilt by this inundation; the herbs and fruits had no longer the same virtue; the air loaded with an excessive moisture strengthened the principles of corruption, and the life of man was shortened. The descendents of Noah, who spread themselves over the face of the whole earth, quickly forgot this terrible effect of the divine indignation; they corrupted their ways, and gave themselves up to all wickedness. It was then that the Eternal resolved to chuse a peculiar people to be the depositary of religion, morality and all divine truths, that they might not be debased and entirely obscured by the imagination, passions and vain reasonings of men. The Sovereign Wisdom chose the most stupid and untractable people to be the guardian of his oracles. Thy Assyrians, Chaldeans and Egyptians, who were eminent for subtilty of understanding and a superior skill in all the sciences, might have been suspected of having mixed their own notions and reasonings with the divine revelations; but the Hebrews, among whom you have found the sublimest ideas of the Divinity and of morality, have nothing in their natural genius

(b) See M. de Meaux universal history.



which can make them suspected of having invented these truths. Abraham, by his faith and obedience, was found worthy to be the head and the father of this happy people. *The Most High* promised him, that his posterity should be multiplied as the stars of heaven, that they should one day possess the land of Canaan, and that of his seed should come the *Desire of Nations* in the fulness of time. The rising family of this patriarch, feeble in its beginnings, went down to Egypt, where they became very numerous, awakened the jealousy of the Egyptians, and were reduced to a state of slavery; but having been tried and purified by all sorts of afflictions for the space of four hundred years, God raised up Moses to deliver them.

*The Most High*, having first inspired our deliverer with the purest wisdom, lent him his almighty power to prove his divine mission by the most signal wonders; these wonders were nothing less than a frequent and instantaneous changing of the order and course of nature. The haughty king of Egypt refused to obey the orders of the *Almighty*. Moses terrified his court with repeated signs of the vengeance of heaven: he stretched out his arm, and the whole kingdom felt its dreadful power; rivers

were turned into blood; swarms of venomous insects spread every where diseases and death; prodigious lightnings with storms of hail destroyed men, beasts and plants; a thick darkness hid for three days all the luminaries of heaven; and an exterminating angel destroyed in one night all the first-born of Egypt. At length the people of God left the land of their captivity, and Pharaoh pursued them with a formidable army. A pillar of fire was their guide by night, and a thick cloud by day concealed their march from the pursuers. Moses spake, the sea divided, the Israelites went through it on dry ground, and were no sooner passed than the sea returned to its strength, and its impetuous waves swallowed up the infidel nation. Our fathers wandered in the desert, where they suffered hunger, thirst, and the inclemency of the seasons: they murmured against God: Moses spake again, a miraculous flood descended from heaven; dry rocks became fountains of living water; the earth opened and swallowed up those who refused to believe the promises, unless they might see their accomplishment. It was in this desert that God himself published his holy law, and dictated all the rites and statutes of our religion. He called up our conductor to the top of mount

Sinai; the mountain trembled, and the voice of the Eternal was heard in thunders and lightnings: he displayed his dreadful power to make an impression upon hearts more disposed to be affected by fear than love. But the God appeared no less in the wonders of his goodness, than in those of his power. The high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, condescended to dwell in a visible manner amongst the children of Israel, and to direct them in all their ways. A moveable sanctuary, with the ark of the covenant, was formed and erected by his order, and the altar was sanctified by the presence of the glory of *The Most High*. The rays of a heavenly light encompassed the tabernacle; and God sitting between the cherubims from thence declared his will. Moses, by the command of God himself, committed to writing our law and our history, the everlasting proofs of his supreme goodness, and of our ingratitude: a little before his death he put this book into the hands of all the people; it was necessary at every instant to consult it, in order to know not only the religious but civil laws; each Hebrew is obliged to read it over once a year, and to transcribe the whole at least once in his life. It was impossible to

alter or corrupt these sacred annals, without the imposture's being discovered and punished as high treason against God, and an attempt against the civil authority.

Moses died; our fathers left the desert; nature was obedient to the voice of Joshua, their new conductor; rivers ran back to their fountain-head; the sun stood still; the walls of a strong city fell down at the approach of the ark; and the most courageous and warlike nations fled before the triumphant armies of Israel, who at length took possession of the promised land. Miracles however do not change the heart, even when they convince the understanding. The strongest conviction is too weak to controul the violence of the passions. Scarce was this ungrateful and inconstant people settled in that land of delights, but they grew weary of being under the immediate government of Jehovah, and were desirous of having a king to go before them like other nations. God gave them a king in his anger, and the Hebrew government became monarchical. Solomon, the wisest and most pacific of our princes, erected a magnificent temple at Jerusalem. The God of peace fixed his habitation upon mount Sion; the miracle of the ark was perpetuated, the glory of the Divine

Majesty filled the sanctuary, oracles were given from the most holy place as often as the high priest went thither to enquire of the Lord. In order to perpetuate the memory of so many miracles, and to demonstrate the truth of them to all future ages, Moses, Joshua, our Judges and our Kings, established solemn festivals and august ceremonies: a numerous nation incredulous and rebellious, their kings, their priests, their tribes which were often divided among themselves, concurred loudly, universally and successively, to give testimony to those miracles by lasting monuments perpetuated from generation to generation. While the Israelites persevered in their obedience, *The Lord of Hosts* was their protector, and rendered them invincible as he had promised; but as soon as they departed from the law of their God, he gave them up a prey to their fierce enemies; nevertheless he chastised them like a father, and did not utterly forsake them. In every age he raised up prophets to threaten, instruct and reform them. These sages being separated from all terrestrial pleasures, united themselves to the sovereign truth; the eyes of the soul, which have been shut since the origin of evil, were opened in these divine men to look into the counsels of Providence, and to know its

secrets. The heavy judgments of God fell often upon the stubborn and untractable Hebrews, and as often this chosen people was brought back by the prophets to own and adore the God of their fathers. At length they were wholly carried away by that wretched inclination in all mortals to corporalize the Deity, and to form to themselves a God with passions like their own. The God of Abraham, faithful in his threatenings as in his promises, has humbled us for many years under the yoke of Nabuchodonosor; Jerusalem is become desolate, and the holy temple an heap of stones; vagabonds and captives in a strange land, we wander upon the banks of Euphrates and silently mourn when we remember Sion. But God having first raised up that proud conqueror to accomplish his eternal purposes, then abased him in his anger. You have been witness both of his punishment and of his deliverance; nevertheless the measure of the divine judgments upon the race of Abraham is not yet filled up: it is you, O Cyrus, who are ordained by *The Most High* to be their deliverer; Jerusalem will be re-peopled, the house of the Lord re-built, and the glory of the latter temple, which will one day be honoured with the presence of the



Messiah, shall be greater than the glory of the former.

But what, said Cyrus, is the design of this law, dictated by God himself with so much pomp, preserved by your fore-fathers with so much care, renewed and confirmed by your prophets with so many miracles? In what does it differ from the religion of other nations? The design of the law and the prophets, replied Daniel, is to shew, that all creatures were pure in their original; that all men are at present born distempered, corrupt and ignorant even to the degree of not knowing their disease, and that human nature will one day be restored to its perfection. The miracles and prodigies, of which I have made you a recital, are, so to speak, but the play of wisdom to lead men in to themselves, and make them attend to those three truths which they will find written in their own hearts, upon all nature, and in the whole plan of providence. The law of Moses is but an unfolding of the law of nature; all its moral precepts are but means more or less remote, to carry us to what may strengthen divine love in us, or to preserve us from what may weaken it. The burnt-offerings, the purifications, the abstinences, all the ceremonies of our worship are but symbols to represent the sacrifice of the

passions, and to shadow out the virtues necessary to re-establish us in our primitive purity; those who stop at the letter find expressions in our sacred books that seem to humanize the Deity, promises that do not appear to have any relation to immortality, and ceremonies which they think unworthy of the sovereign Reason: but the true sage penetrates into their hidden meaning, and discovers mysteries in them of the highest wisdom. The foundation of the whole law, and of all the prophecies is the doctrine of a nature pure in its original, corrupted by sin, and to be one day restored. These three fundamental truths are represented in our history under various images. The bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, their journey through the desert, and their arrival in the promised land, represent to us the fall of souls, their sufferings in this mortal life, and their return to their heavenly country. The hidden meaning does not destroy the literal sense, nor does the letter of the law exclude allegory; it is equally profane to deny the one, or to despise the other. These three principles, the traces of which are to be found in all religions, have been transmitted from age to age from the deluge to our time; Noah taught them to his children, whose posterity spread them after-

wards over all the earth; but in passing from mouth to mouth they have been altered and obscured by the imagination of the poets, the superstition of the priests, and the different genius of each nation. We find more remarkable footsteps of them among the Orientals and Egyptians than any where else; because Abraham (a), our first patriarch, who was famous in Asia, renewed them here, and because the people of God were a long time in captivity on the banks of the Nile: but these ancient truths have been no where preserved in their perfect purity, except in the oracles written by our law-giver, our historians and our prophets.

But this is not all: there is a mystery which no where unfolded but in our religion, and of which I would not speak to you, O Cyrus, if you were not the anointed of *The Most High*, and his servant chosen for the deliverance of his people. The prophecies mention two advents of the Messiah, one in suffering, the other in glory. The *Great Emanuel* will, many ages before his triumphant appearance in the clouds, live here upon earth in a state of humiliation: he will expiate sin by the sacrifice of himself before he restores the universe to its

(a) See Jos. Ant. lib. 1. cap. 7, & 8. Eupolem. apud Seb. & Voss. de Philosoph. sectis, cap. 1. p. 3.

primitive splendor. The ancient tradition from Noah concerning this grand sacrifice was what suggested to all nations the first thought of offering victims to *The Most High* as type of that perfect holocaust: your priests having lost these primitive ideas foolishly imagined that the friendship of the immortals was to be gained by shedding the blood of beasts; but what relation is there between the divine goodness and cruel immolation of harmless animals without our tradition about the great Emanuel, the original of your sacrifices is a perfect enigma.

Here Cyrus interrupted Daniel and said: Who is this great Emanuel of whom you speak? is he the same with him whom the Persians call Mythras, the Egyptians Orus, the Tyrians Adonis, the Greeks Jupiter the Conductor, Apollo and Hercules? The GREAT EMANUEL answered the prophet, is he who is called the *Desire of Nations*; he has been known to them by an ancient tradition, the source of which they are ignorant of, and which they have degraded by their fabulous names and impure images. The great Emanuel is not, as some of your philosophers say, a subordinate God, but equal in glory to the great Jehovah: he is not a demi-God, but possesses in himself all

the fulness of the God-head: he is not a free production of the power of THE MOST HIGH, but a necessary emanation from his substance. All other beings, how exalted soever, whether angels or archangels, Seraphim or Cherubim were drawn out of nothing and may return to nothing again; but He is a pure stream flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the majesty of God, and the express image of his goodness: he is of the same essence, he has the same attributes, but who can declare his generation? let us not rashly pry into those impenetrable secrets; it is sufficient to know, that the *Desire of Nations* will appear upon the earth to bear our griefs, that he will be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

But what necessity is there, cried out Cyrus, for this great sacrifice? has God any need of a bloody victim to appease his wrath? can the infinite Goodness require such a cruel holocaust? beware of falling into the same error with which you reproach our priests. God has no need, replied Daniel, of an inhuman sacrifice to pacify his vengeance, but he would countenance the rebellion of spirits and contradict himself should he pardon the criminal with-

out shewing his abhorrence of the crime, and display the whole extent of his goodness without asserting the prerogatives of his holiness. The divine Emanuel will leave the bosom of his Father, and remain long upon earth exiled from his presence; the living image of the majesty of God will take on him the form of a servant; the eternal WORD will become a mute babe, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; the brightness of the uncreated Light will suffer an eclipse that will terrify the Seraphim and Cherubim; he will shew by his annihilation the homage that is due to the ETERNAL; by his humiliation the injustice of our pride; by his sufferings the necessity of our expiatory pains; and lastly, by his agony and the inexpressible anguish which our iniquities will cause him, the infinite aversion of the Most HIGH to the violation of order. 'Tis by this means that he will reconcile the justice of God with his mercy, repair the wrong done to his laws, and be at the same time both a sacrifice for sin and a model of all virtue. The history of his conflicts and triumphs will be for ever recorded in the registers of heaven, and give eternal testimony to the divine Wisdom, Goodness and Justice. I see from afar that day which will be the consolation of the just and



the joy of angels: all the heavenly powers will be present at this mystery, and adore its depth; mortals will see nothing but the shell and the outside. Those Hebrews who expect only a triumphant Messiah will not comprehend this first advent; the pretenders to wisdom in all nations, who judge only by appearances, will blaspheme against what they understand not: nay, the most just among men will in this life see only as in a mystery the beauty, extent and necessity of that great sacrifice.

The prince of Persia was struck by this discourse and wavered in his thoughts; he perceived that all the discoveries made by Zoroaster, Hermes, Orpheus and Pythagoras were but imperfect traces and chance rays of the tradition from Noah: in Persia, Egypt, Greece and in all other nations he had found only obscure, uncertain and loose opinions; but with the Hebrews, he had found books, prophecies and miracles, the authority of which was incontestible. Nevertheless, he saw the truth only as through a cloud, his heart was not yet touched; he waited for the accomplishment of Isaiah's prediction. Daniel was not ignorant of the situation of his mind, and said to him: O Cyrus, religion is not a system of philosophical opinions; nor yet a history of miracles, or

supernatural events, but a science that dilates the heart and fills it with godlike sentiments, a science which God reveals only to pure minds; to know the secrets of religion, to feel its energy, a superior power to man must descend into you, become absolute master of you, and ravish you from yourself: your heart will then feel those truths which your understanding has now but a small glimpse of. The time for this is not yet come, but it approaches (*b*); until that happy moment, be content with knowing that the God of Israel loves you, will go before you, and will accomplish his will by you: this accomplishment will be an invincible proof of the truth of all I have said to you. Make haste to verify his oracles, and return with speed into Persia, where your presence is necessary.

The young hero soon after left Babylon; the year following Nabuchodonosor died, and his successors broke the alliance sworn between the Assyrians and Persians. Cyrus spent twenty whole years in war with the Assyrians and their allies: the several nations of the east observing his moderation in the midst of triumphs, willingly submitted to his empire, and the conquests made by his humanity were more numerous than those of his sword. Being ever as

(*b*) Vide Theodoret de fide.

generous as invincible, he made no other use of victory than to render the vanquished happy, and employed his power only to make justice flourish and to establish and maintain the most excellent laws. The taking of Babylon made him master of all the East from the river Indus to Greece, and from the Caspian sea to the extremities of Egypt. Seeing then the entire accomplishment of Isaiah's prediction, his heart became affected with the truths he had learned from Daniel; the mist before his eyes was totally dispelled, he openly avowed the God of Israel, and released the Hebrews from their captivity by this solemn edict, which was published throughout the whole extent of his vast dominions. "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia. The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Whoever among you is of his people, his God be with him: and let him go up to Jerusalem and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, he is the God."

# A DISCOURSE

## UPON THE THEOLOGY and MYTHOLOGY Of the PAGANS.

**M**Y first design was to insert some critical notes in the margin of the foregoing book; but as the attending to such remarks would have diverted the reader's mind too much from the principal subject, I thought it better to digest them into the form of a discourse, which I divide into two parts. In the first I shall shew, that the most celebrated philosophers of all ages and all countries have had the notion of a supreme Deity, who produced the world by his power, and governs it by his wisdom. From the second it will appear, that there are traces of the principal doctrines of revealed religion, with regard to the three states of the world, to be found in the mythology of all nations.

(a) Herodotus

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(b) Strabo

## PART I.

*Of the THEOLOGY of the PAGANS.*

TO begin with the Magi or Persian philosophers; according to the testimony of Herodotus (*a*), the antient Persians had neither statues, nor temples, nor altars: 'They think it ridiculous (says this author) to fancy, like the Greeks, that the gods have an human shape, or derive their original from men. They choose the highest mountains for the place of their sacrifice: they use neither libations, nor music, nor hallowed bread; but when any one has a mind to sacrifice, he leads the victim into a clean place, and wearing a wreath of mirtle about his Tiara, invokes the god to whom he intends to offer it. The priest is not allowed to pray for his own private good, but for that of the nation in general; each particular member finding his benefit in the prosperity of the whole.'

Strabo (*b*) gives the same account of the antient Persians. 'They neither erected statues

(*a*) Herod. Clío. lib. 1. p. 56. Sect. 131, Edit. Francof. 1600.

(*b*) Strabo lib. 15, p. 732. Edit. Paris. 1620.

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‘nor altars (says this historian) they sacrificed  
 ‘in a clean place and upon an eminence where  
 ‘they offered up a victim crowned. When  
 ‘the priest had cut it into small pieces, every  
 ‘one took his share. They left no portion of  
 ‘it for the deities, saying, that God desires no-  
 ‘thing but the soul of the victim.’ The Ori-  
 entals, full of the notion of transmigration i-  
 magined, that the victim was animated by a  
 criminal soul, whose expiatory pains were com-  
 pleted by the sacrifice.

The Persians indeed, as well as other Pa-  
 gans, worshipped the fire, the sun, and the  
 stars: but we shall see that they considered  
 them only as visible images and symbols of a  
 supreme God, whom they believed to be the  
 sovereign Lord of nature. Plutarch has left  
 us, in his treatise of Isis and Osiris, a fragment  
 of the Theology of the Magi. This philoso-  
 phical historian assures us, that they called the  
 great God, Oromazes, or the principle of light,  
 that produced every thing, and worketh all in  
 all (c). They admitted however another God,  
 but of an inferior nature and order, whom they  
 called (d) Mythras or the Middle God. They

(c) Plut. de Isid. et Osir. Edit. Paris, 1645. p. 370.

(d) Mss. 1745. ①105.



He speaks of him sometimes as a being co-eternal with the supreme Divinity, and at other times as the first production of his power (e).

The finest definition we have of the Deity among all the writings of the antients, is that of Zoroaster. It has been transmitted down to us by Eusebius in his *Præparatio Evangelica*; an author so far from being over favourable to the Pagans, that he makes it his business continually to expose and degrade their philosophy. And yet he says, that he had read these express words in a book of Zoroaster that was extant in his time, and known by the title of, The sacred collection of Persian monuments.

‘(f) God is the first of all incorruptible beings, eternal and unbegotten: he is not compounded of parts: there is nothing equal to him, or like him. He is the author of all good, and entirely disinterested; the most excellent of all excellent beings, and the wisest of all intelligent natures; the father of equity, the parent of good laws, self-instructed, self-sufficient, and the first former of nature.

The modern writers among the Arabians and Persians, who have preserved to us what remains of the antient doctrine of Zoroaster a-

(e) See Cudworth’s *intell. system*, p. 288.

(f) Euseb. *Præp. Evang. lib. 1. p. 42*, Edit. Paris,

mong the Guebri or worshippers of the fire maintain that the first Magi admitted only one eternal principle of all things. Abulfeda, cited by the famous Dr. Pocock, says, that according to the primitive doctrine of the Persians (*g*), 'God was prior to both light and darkness, and had existed from all eternity in an adorable solitude, without any companion or rival.' Saristhant, quoted by Dr. Hyde says, 'That the first Magi (*h*) did not look upon the good and evil principles as co-eternal; they thought that light was indeed eternal; but that darkness was produced in time by the disloyalty of Ahriman, chief of the genii.'

M. Bayle affirms in his dictionary, that the ancient Persians were all Manicheans; but however he came to entertain this notion, he must certainly have given it up, if he had consulted the original authors: a method which that famous critic did not always take. He had a genius capable of going to the bottom of any subject whatever; but he wrote sometimes in a hurry, and treated superficially the gravest and most important subjects. Besides

(*g*) Pocock *specim. hist. Arab.* p. 146.

(*h*) Hyde *Relig. Ant. Persar.* cap. 9. pag. 161. et cap. 211. p. 390.

There is no clearing him from the charge of showing too much the dismal obscurity of scepticism; he is ever upon his guard against all satisfactory ideas in religion; he shews with art and subtlety all the dark sides of the question, but he very rarely represents it in that point of light which shines with evidence. What encomiums would he not have merited, had he employed his admirable talents more for the benefit of mankind?

Such was the Theology of the antient Persians, which in the foregoing work I have put in the mouth of Zoroaster; and the Egyptians had much the same principles. There is nothing more absurd than the notion generally given us of their Theology; nor is any thing more improbable than the allegorical sense which certain authors fancy they have discovered in their hieroglyphics. On one hand, it is hard to believe that human nature could ever sink so low as to adore insects, reptiles and plants (which they see produced, growing and dying every day) without ascribing certain divine virtues to them, or considering them as symbols of some invisible power. In the most barbarous countries we still find some knowledge of a superior Being, which is the object of the hope and fear of the most stupid fava-

ges. But though we should suppose there are some nations in the world sunk into so gross and ignorance as to have no notion of a Deity, yet it is certain that Egypt cannot be charged with such a degree of stupidity. All historians, as well sacred as prophane, agree in speaking of this people as the wisest of all nations; and one of the encomiums that the holy Spirit gives to Moses, is, that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Would the Holy Ghost ever have spoken in such a manner of a nation so senseless as to worship onions, crocodiles and the most despicable reptiles? On the other hand, there are certain modern writers who exalt the Theology of the Egyptians too high, and fancy that they find in their hieroglyphics all the mysteries of the christian religion. After the deluge, Noah doubtless would not leave his children ignorant of the great principles of religion, with regard to the three states of mankind; and that tradition might have been spread from generation to generation over all the nations of the world: but we should not infer from thence, that the Heathens had as clear notions of the divine Nature and the Messiah, as the Jews had themselves. Such a supposition, far from doing honour to Holy Writ, would only derogate from its dignity. I shall

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endeavour to keep the just medium between these two extremes.

Plutarch, in his treatise of Isis and Osiris, tells us (i) that the theology of the Egyptians had two meanings; the one holy and symbolical, the other vulgar and literal; and consequently that the figures of animals which they had in their temples, and which they seemed to adore, were only so many hieroglyphics to represent the divine attributes. Pursuant to this distinction, he says, that Osiris signifies the active principle, or the most holy being (k); Isis the wisdom or rule of his operation; Orus the first production of his power, the model or plan by which he produced every thing, or the archetype of the world. We shall see hereafter whether it be reasonable to think, that the Pagans had ever any knowledge of a trinity of distinct persons in the indivisible unity of the divine nature. Thus much at least is plain, that the Chaldeans and Egyptians believed all the attributes of the Deity might be reduced to three, power, understanding, and love. In reality, whenever we disengage ourselves from matter, impose silence on the senses and imagination, and raise our thoughts to the

(i) Plut. de Isid. et Osir. p. 354.

(k) Ibid. p. 373, 374, 375.

contemplation of the infinitely infinite Being, we find that the eternal essence presents itself to our mind, under the three forms of power, wisdom, and goodness. These three attributes comprehend the totality of his nature, and whatever we can conceive of him. Not to speak therefore of the primitive traditions, which might possibly be the source of these three ideas concerning the divine nature, it is nothing extraordinary, if the Egyptians and Orientals, who had very refining metaphysical heads should of themselves have discovered them. The Greeks and Romans were fonder of the sciences which depend on sense and imagination: and for this reason we find their Mythology seldom turns upon any thing but the external operations of the Deity in the productions of nature, whereas that of the former chiefly regards his internal operations and attributes.

By the help of these principles the Theology of the Pagans may be reduced to three principal divinities, without doing violence to original authors, and without racking one's brain to digest their ideas, which are often very confused, into an intelligible system. They universally acknowledged one Supreme God, whom they considered as the source of the divinity,

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and the author of all beings : a goddess his wife, daughter or sister, whom they represented sometimes as the principle of the divine fecundity, at other times as an emanation from his wisdom, and often as the companion and subject of his operations; and lastly, a subordinate god, the son and viceroy of the Supreme. And thus we find among the Persians the great Oromazes, the goddess Mythra, and the god Mythras : among the Egyptians Osiris, Isis and Orus ; among the Greeks Jupiter, Minerva and Apollo.

In proportion as men departed from their primitive simplicity, and as imagination took the place of reason, the poets multiplied the names and images of these gods, and the three superior divinities were lost in a croud of inferior deities. It is nevertheless certain, that the philosophers always preserved those three capital ideas. Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Porphyry, Jamblichus, Plutarch, Macrobius and all the philosophical writers whose works have been transmitted to us, and who speak of the gods of Egypt and Greece, assure us that Ptha, Amoun, Osiris, Apis, Serapis and Anu-

(I) See Huet. Dem. Evang. Jambl. de Myst. Egypt. p. 10. Plut. Isis and Osir. p. 327. Macrobi. lib. 1. Saturn. Intel. System, from p. 484 to 494.

his are the same; that Mars, Mercury, Apollo, Hercules, and Jupiter the conductor are also the same; that Cybele, Venus, Urania, Juno, Minerva, Phebe and Proserpine are in like manner one and the same. Whence we may fairly conclude, without falling into chimerical conjectures, that Oromazes, Osiris, Coelus, Saturn and Jupiter Olympius are different names to express the one supreme God; that Mythra, Isis, Cybele, Urania, Juno and Minerva denote the different attributes of the same goddess; and lastly that Mythras, Orus, Mercury, Apollo, Hercules, and Jupiter the conductor are several titles of the middle god, universally acknowledged by the Pagans.

I know that the modern materialists have endeavoured to reduce all the Pagan divinities to one god and one goddess, which according to them, express only the two principles of nature, whereof one is active, or the infinite force, the cause of all the motions we behold in the universe; the other passive, or the external matter, which is the subject of all the forms produced by that moving force: this idea is by far posterior to that of the Orientals, Egyptians and first Greeks, concerning the three forms of the divinity. It was neither received nor known, in the sense of the materialists,

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but by the disciples of Epicurus, as we shall see hereafter.

This distinction of the gods into the three classes, and that of the world into three states, may be of great service to clear up the confusion of the antient Mythologies. I will venture to say, that neither Scaliger, nor Bochart nor Graevius, nor Gronovius, nor M. Huet, could succeed in this enterprize, because they were men of more learning than philosophy. Grammarians, Critics, and those persons of strong memories, who employ themselves wholly in the study of words and facts are rarely remarkable for a nice examination of principles, and are not always capable of entering into the sense of the philosophers or distinguishing the subtilty of their ideas. I confess indeed, that it is dangerous to be too much attached to systems, but yet without a systematical genius it is impossible to carry the sciences to any great perfection.

To return to Plutarch. He concludes his treatise of Isis and Osiris in this manner (*m*):  
 'As he who reads the works of Plato may be said to read Plato, and he who acts the comedy of Menander may be said to act Menander; so the ancients gave the name of  
 (*m*) Page 377 and 378.

' gods to the various productions of the Deity.  
 Plutarch had said a little before, ' That care  
 ' should be taken not to transform, dissolve and  
 ' scatter the divine nature into rivers, winds,  
 ' vegetables, or bodily forms and motions.  
 ' This would be as ridiculous as to imagine,  
 ' that the sails, the cables, the rigging and the  
 ' anchor are the pilot: or that the thread, the  
 ' woof, and shuttle are the weaver. Such sense-  
 ' less notions are an indignity to the heavenly  
 ' powers, whom they blaspheme whilst they  
 ' give the name of gods to beings of an insen-  
 ' sible, inanimate and corruptible nature.  
 ' Nothing, as he goes on, that is without  
 ' soul, nothing that is material and to be per-  
 ' ceived by our senses, can be God. Nor yet  
 ' must we imagine that there are different  
 ' gods, according to the different countries of  
 ' Greeks and Barbarians, Northern and South-  
 ' ern people. As the sun is common to all the  
 ' world, though called by different names in  
 ' different places; so there is but one sole su-  
 ' preme mind or reason, and one and the same  
 ' providence that governs the world, though  
 ' he is worshipped under different names, and  
 ' has appointed some inferior powers for his  
 ' ministers.' Such, according to Plutarch, was

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the doctrine of the first Egyptians with regard to the divine nature.

Origen, who was contemporary with Plutarch, follows the same principles in his book against Celsus, a Pagan philosopher, who pretended to understand Christianity, because he understood some ceremonies of that religion, though he had never entered into the spirit of it. Now Origen expresses himself in this manner: (n) 'The Egyptian philosophers have sublime notions with regard to the divine nature, which they keep secret, and never discover to the people but under a veil of fables and allegories. Celsus is like a man who has travelled into that country; and though he has conversed with none but the ignorant vulgar, yet takes it into his head, that he understands the Egyptian religion. All the Eastern nations, the Persians, the Indians, the Syrians, conceal secret mysteries under their religious fables. The wise men of all those religions see into the sense and true meaning of them, whilst the vulgar go no further than the exterior symbol, and see only the bark that covers them.'

Let us next hear the testimony of Jamblicus, who had studied the religion of the E-

(n) Orig. contra Cels. lib. 1. p. 11.

gyptians, and understood it throughly. He lived in the beginning of the third century, and was a disciple of the famous Porphyry. As both St. Clement (*o*) and St. Cyril of Alexandria (*p*) assure us, there were at that time a great many Egyptian books extant, which have since been lost: several of these were highly respected for their antiquity, and ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, or one of his first disciples. Jamblichus had read these books, which had been translated by the Greeks, and this is the account that he gives of the Theology which they taught. 'According to the Egyptians, Eicton, or the first God, existed in his solitary unity before all things (*q*). He is the fountain and original of every thing that either has understanding or is to be understood. He is the first principle of all things, self-sufficient, incomprehensible, and the father of all essences.' Hermes says likewise, 'That this supreme God has constituted another God, called Emeph, to be head over all spirits whether etherial, empyrean, or celestial; and that this second God, whom he styles the guide, is a wisdom that transforms and converts into itself all spiritual Beings. He makes

(*o*) Strom. l. 6. p. 133.

(*p*) Contra Julian, lib. 1.

(*q*) Jamb. de Myst. Egyp. Ed. Lugd. 152, 153. 154.



nothing superior to this god-guide, but only the first intelligent, and first intelligible, who ought to be adored in silence.' He adds, 'That the spirit which produceth all things has different names, according to his different properties and operations; that he is called in the Egyptian language Amoun, as he is wise; Ptha, as he is the life of all things; and Osiris, as he is the author of all good.' Thus, according to Jamblichus, it is evident that the Egyptians admitted only one principle, and a middle god, like the Mythras of the Persians.

The notion of a spirit constituted by the supreme God, to be the head and guide of all spirits, is very ancient. The Hebrew doctors believed that the soul of the Messias was created from the beginning of the world, and appointed to preside over all the orders of intelligences. This opinion was founded on a notion, that finite natures cannot incessantly contemplate the brightness and glories of the divine essence; and must necessarily sometimes turn off their view, and adore the Creator in his work; that at such times there must be an head to lead spirits through all the regions of immensity, and shew them all its beauties and wonders.

To have a more perfect knowledge of the Theology of the Orientals and Egyptians, it may not be improper to examine that of the Greeks and Romans, which is derived originally from it. The philosophers of Greece went to study wisdom in Asia and Egypt. Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, drew the best of their knowledge from thence. The traces of oriental tradition are now indeed in a manner worn out : but as there are several monuments of the Theology of the Greeks still preserved, we may judge of the masters by their disciples.

We must however distinguish between the gods of the poets and those of the philosophers. Poetry deifies all the various parts of nature, and gives spirit to bodies, as well as body to spirits : It expresses the operations and properties of matter by the actions and passions of such invisible powers, as the Pagans supposed to be directors of all the motions and events that we see in the universe. The poets pass in a moment from allegory to the literal sense, and from the literal sense to allegory ; from real Gods to fabulous Deities : and this occasions that jumble of their images, that absurdity in their fictions, and that indecorum in their expressions, which are so justly condemned by the Philosophers. Notwithstanding this mul-

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plication of inferior Deities, these poets however acknowledged that there was but one only supreme God. This will appear from the very ancient traditions which we still have of the philosophy of Orpheus. I am far from thinking that Orpheus was the author of those works which go under his name: I believe with the famous Grotius, that those books were wrote by the Pythagoreans, who professed themselves disciples of Orpheus: but whoever were the authors of these writings, it is certain that they are older than Herodotus and Plato, and were in great esteem among the heathens; so that by the fragments of them still preserved, we may form a judgment of the ancient Theology of the Greeks. I shall begin with the abridgment which Timotheus the Cosmographer gives us of the doctrine of Orpheus. This abridgment is preserved in Suidas (*r*), Cedrenus (*s*) and Eusebius.

‘ There is one unknown Being exalted above and prior to all things, the author of all things, even of the aether and of every thing that is below the aether; this exalted being is life, light and wisdom; which three names express only one and the same power, which drew all beings, visible and invisible, out of

(*r*) Suidas de Orph. 350.

(*s*) Cedrenus, p. 47.

nothing.' It appears by this passage, that the doctrine of the creation, (or the production of substances) and that of the three forms of the Divinity were not unknown to the heathen philosophers: we shall soon find them in Plato.

Proclus has transmitted down to us this extraordinary passage of the Theology of Orpheus (*t*). 'The universe was produced by Jupiter, the empyraeum, the deep Tartarus, the earth, and the ocean, the immortal gods and goddesses; all that is, all that has been, and all that shall be, was contained originally in the fruitful bosom of Jupiter. Jupiter is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. All beings derive their origin from him. He is the primitive father and the immortal Virgin. He is the life, the cause, and the energy of all things. There is but one only power, one only God, and one sole universal King of all.' This passage seems to insinuate, that the universe is a substantial emanation from the divine essence, and not a mere effect of his power: however, this gross error is no proof of Atheism in him who maintains it, as we shall see hereafter.

I shall conclude the Theology of Orpheus

(*t*) Proclus de Timaeo, p. 95. Edit. Fugger. An. 1566.

with a famous passage of the author of the Argonautica, who is looked upon to be a disciple of his (u). 'We will sing first an hymn upon the ancient chaos; how the heavens, the sea, and the earth were formed out of it. We will sing likewise that eternal, wise, and self-perfect love, which reduced this chaos into order (w).' It is clear enough from the doctrine of the theogony or birth of the gods, that the ancient poets ascribed all to a first being, who disentangled the chaos. And it is for this reason that Ovid thus expresses himself in the first book of his Metamorphoses (x). 'Before there was a sea and an earth, before there was an heaven to cover the world, universal nature was but one indegested sluggish mass, called a chaos. The seeds of all things jumbled together were in a perpetual discord, till a beneficent Deity put an end to the difference.' Words which shew plainly that the Latin poet, who followed the Greek tradition makes a distinction between the chaos, and God, who by his wisdom brought it out of

(u) Argon. apud Steph. p. 71.

(w) Ver. 423. Πρῶτον τε, καὶ αὐτοτελῆ-  
τιλούμεν Ἔρωτα.

(x) Ovid Metam. lib. 1. p. 1.

confusion, into order. I ought however in this place to observe, that the Greek and Roman Mythology, in relation to the chaos, is much more imperfect than that of the Orientals and Egyptians, who tell us that there was an happy and perfect state of the world prior to the chaos; that the good principle could never produce any thing evil; that his first work could not be confusion and disorder; and in a word, that Physical evil is nothing else but a consequence of moral evil. It was the imagination of the Greek poets that first brought forth the monstrous Manichean doctrine of two co-eternal principles; a supreme Intelligence and a blind matter; light and darkness; an indigested chaos and a Deity to reduce it into order.

Let any one read Homer and Virgil with a proper attention, and he will see, that notwithstanding the wild flights of their imagination, and the indecent allegories by which they sometimes dishonour the Divine Nature, the marvelous which runs through their fable is founded upon these three principles. 1. That there is one supreme God, whom they every where call the father, and the sovereign Lord of gods and men, the Architect of the world, the Prince and governor of the universe, the first God, and the great God. 2. That univer-

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sal nature is full of subordinate spirits, who are the ministers of that supreme God. 3. That good and evil, virtue and vice, knowledge and error, arise from the different influence and inspiration of the good and evil Genii, who dwell in the air, the sea, the earth, and the heavens.

The tragic and lyric poets express themselves after the same manner as the epic poets. Euripides expressly acknowledges the dependence of all beings upon one sole principle.

'O Father and king of Gods and men! says he, why do we miserable mortals fancy that we know any thing, or can do any thing? Our fate depends upon thy will (y).'

Sophocles represents the Deity to us as a sovereign intelligence, which is truth, wisdom, and the eternal law of all spirits (z). 'Tis not, says he, to any mortal nature that laws owe their origin; they come from above; they come down from heaven itself; Jupiter Olympius is alone the father of them.'

Plautus introduceth an inferior deity speaking in this manner (a): 'I am a citizen of the celestial city, of which Jupiter, the father of gods and men, is the head. He commands

(y) Eurip. Supplic. Act, 3. ver. 734. &c. Edit. Cant.

(z) In Oedip. Tyran.

(a) Plaut. Rudent.

' the nations, and sends us over all kingdoms  
 ' to take an account of the conduct and actions,  
 ' the piety and virtue of men. In vain do mor-  
 ' tals endeavour to bribe him with their obla-  
 ' tions and sacrifices. They lose their pains,  
 ' for he abhors the worship of the impious.'

' O Muse, says Horace, pursuant to the cus-  
 ' tom of our ancestors, celebrate first the great  
 ' Jove, who rules over Gods and men, the earth,  
 ' the seas, and the whole universe: there is no  
 ' thing greater than he, nothing that is like,  
 ' nothing that is equal to him (b) !'

I shall conclude my quotations out of the  
 poets with a surprising passage of Lucan. When  
 Cato, after crossing the deserts of Lybia, ar-  
 rives at the temple of Jupiter Ammon, Labie-  
 nus is for persuading him to consult the oracle.  
 Upon which occasion the poet puts this answer  
 in the mouth of that philosophical hero; '(c)  
 ' Why do you, Labienus, propose to me to ask  
 ' the Oracle whether we should choose to die  
 ' in a state of freedom with our swords in our  
 ' hands, rather than see tyranny enslave our  
 ' country? Whether this mortal life be only  
 ' a remora to a more lasting one? Whether  
 ' violence can hurt a good man? Whether  
 ' virtue does not make us superior to misfor-

(b) B. 1. Ode 12.

(c) Lucan, lib. 9. v. 566.

'tunes? And whether true glory depends up-  
 'on success? We know these things already,  
 'and the oracle cannot give us clearer answers  
 'than what God makes us feel every moment  
 'in the bottom of our heart. We are all u-  
 'nited to the Deity. He has no need of words  
 'to convey his meaning to us; and he told us  
 'at our birth every thing that we have occasi-  
 'on to know. He hath not chosen the parch-  
 'ed sands of Lybia to bury truth in those de-  
 'serts, that it might be understood only by a  
 'small number. He makes himself known to  
 'all the world, he fills all places, the earth,  
 'the sea, the air, the heavens; he makes his  
 'particular abode in the soul of the just: Why  
 'then shall we seek him elsewhere?' In the fore-  
 going passage I have omitted this expression,  
*Jupiter est quodcunque vides*; not only because  
 in some manuscripts we read *Jupiter est quo-*  
*cunque vides*, but also because the poet by the  
 word *quodcunque* confounds the visible world  
 with the ethereal matter, which the Stoics and  
 Orientals considered as the body of the Divi-  
 nity: however he represents Cato as acknow-  
 ledging a sovereign intelligence, which is all  
 that I would prove.

Let us pass from the poets to the philoso-  
 phers; and begin with Thales the Milesian,

chief of the Ionic school (*d*), who lived above six hundred years before the birth of Christ. We have none of his works now left; but we have some of his maxims, which have been transmitted down to us by the most venerable writers of antiquity. 'God is the most ancient of all beings; he is the author of the universe, which is full of wonders (*e*); he is the mind which brought the chaos out of confusion into order (*f*); he is without beginning and without ending, and nothing is his from him (*g*); nothing can resist the force of fate; but this fate is nothing but the immutable reason and eternal power of Providence (*h*).' What is still more surprising in Thales, is his definition of the soul, he calls it 'a self-moving principle' (*i*), thereby to distinguish it from matter.

Pythagoras (*k*) is the second great philosopher after Thales, and chief of the Italic school. Every body knows the abstinence, silence, re-

(*d*) Flor. Olym. L. (*e*) Diog. Laert. vita Thal. lib. 1.

(*f*) Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. 1. p. 1113. Edit. Amst. 1661.

(*g*) S. Clem. Alex. Strom. v.

(*h*) Stob. Ecl. Phys. cap. 8. (*i*) Plut. de Plat. Phil. lib. 1. c. 2. Stob. Ecl. Phys. cap. 40.

(*k*) Floruit Olym. LX.

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(1) Plut. Vit  
(2) Vit. Pyth  
(3) S. Just. C  
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reement and great purity of morals which he required of his disciples. He was very sensible that human understanding alone could never attain to the knowledge of divine things, unless the heart was purged of its passions. Now these are the notions which he has left us of the Deity. ‘(l) God is neither the object of sense, nor subject to passion; but invisible, purely intelligible, and supremely intelligent. In his body he is like the light, and in his soul he resembles truth (m). He is the universal Spirit that pervades and diffuseth itself over all nature. All beings receive their life from him (n). There is but one only God, who is not, as some are apt to imagine, seated above the world, beyond the orb of the universe; but being all in himself, he sees all the beings that inhabit his immensity. He is the sole Principle, the Light of heaven, the Father of all; he produces every thing, he orders and disposes every thing: he is the reason, the life, and the motion of all beings (o).’

He taught that besides the first Principle, there were three sorts of intelligent beings,

(l) Plut. Vita Numae et Diog. Laert. lib. 12.

(m) Vit. Pyth. Porphy.

(n) Laët. Inst. lib. 5.

(o) S. Just. Cohort. 1. ad Graec. p. 18.

gods, heroes, and souls (*p*). He considered the first as the unalterable images of the sovereign Mind, human souls as the least perfect of reasonable substances, and heroes as a sort of middle beings placed between the two others, in order to raise up souls to the divine union (*q*). Thus, he represents to us the divine Immenfity as containing innumerable worlds inhabited by spirits of different orders. And this is the true sense of that famous expression ascribed to the Pythagoreans, that unity was the principle of all things, and that from this unity there sprang an infinite duality. We are not by this duality to understand the two principles of the Manichees; but, as some think, the second and third forms of the Orphean trinity and triform Deity, or, rather, a world of intelligent and corporeal substances, which is the effect whereof unity is the cause (*n*). This is the sentiment of Porphyry, and it ought to be preferred before that of Plutarch, who is for ascribing the Manichean system to Pythagoras, without producing for it any proof.

Pythagoras agreed with Thales in defining the soul to be a self-moving principle (*o*). He

(*p*) Diog. Laert. lib. 8.  
Carm. Aurea Pyth.

(*n*) Porphyr. vita Pyth.

(*q*) Hierocl. Com. in

(*o*) Plut. Plac. l. 4. cap. 2.



maintained farther, 'That when it quits the body, it is re-united to the soul of the world' (p): that it is not a god, but the work of an eternal God (q); and that it is immortal on account of its principle (r).' This philosopher was of opinion that man was composed of three parts (s), a pure spirit, an ethereal matter, which he called the subtle vehicle of the soul, and a mortal or gross body. The old Greek poets had dressed up this opinion in a different guise; they called the ethereal body the representation, the image, or the shadow; because they fancied that this subtle body, when it came down from heaven to animate the terrestrial body, assumed its form just as melted metal takes that of the mould in which it is cast. They said, that after death, the spirit still cloathed with this subtle vehicle, flew up to the regions of the moon, where they placed the Elysian fields. And there, as they imagined, a sort of second death ensued by the separation of the pure spirit from its vehicle: the one was united to the gods, the other staid in the abode of the shades. This is the reason why Ulysses says in the *Odyssæis*, 'That he saw in the

(p) Cic. de Senec. c. 21.

(q) Ib. de Nat. Deor. l. 2. (r) Tusc. lib. 1. p. 1300.

(s) Πνευμα, ψυχη, σωμα.

# 196 OF THE THEOLOGY

‘ Elyſian fields the divine Hercules, i. e. his  
‘ mage; for as him, he is with the immortal  
‘ gods, and aſſiſts at their banquets (1).’ Py-  
thagoras did not adopt the poetic fiction of a  
ſecond death. He held, that the pure ſpirit  
and its ſubtle vehicle being born together, were  
inſeparable, and returned after death to the  
ſtar from whence they deſcended. The Pla-  
toniſts and almoſt all the antient philoſophers  
had the ſame notion (u). St. Paul ſpeaking of  
the reſurrection, ſeems to favour this diſtinction  
of the celeftial and terreſtrial body: ‘ But  
‘ ſome will ſay, how are the dead raiſed up  
‘ and with what body do they come? Thou  
‘ fool, that which thou ſoweſt is not that body  
‘ which ſhall be, but bare grain.—So alſo is  
‘ the reſurrection of the dead, it is ſown in corrup-  
‘ tion, it is raiſed in incorruption; it is ſown  
‘ in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory; it is ſown  
‘ in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power; it is ſown  
‘ a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body—  
‘ Now this I ſay, brethren, becauſe that fleſh  
‘ and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of

(1) Odyſſ. lib. 11. p. 167.

(u) Plot. Enn. 4. l. 3 et Enn. 6. l. 4. Philopon. Proem-  
in Ariſt. de Anim Procl. Comm. in Tim. p. 164. 290. Hi-  
erocl. aurea Carm. p. 293. Suidas the word *Avyrouδης*  
Cudworth intellect. ſyſt. p. 79.

God (x).’ Hence it is that some of the ancient fathers, as well as our modern divines (y) have concluded, that the mortal and terrestrial body, which is ever changing, and does not continue one moment the same, is something merely accidental to our substance, and does not originally belong to it: a thick crust, a coarse covering cast over the celestial, spiritual, active and glorious body, which being unveiled and enlarged at the resurrection, will appear in all its beauty; that this immortal seed, this incorruptible body, this hidden principle, which is perhaps at present the seat of the soul, will, for reasons known to God only, remain buried after death in the common mass of matter till the last manifestation of the divine Power; and that then the face of the earth will be renewed by purifying flames, which will purge our globe of all that dark and earthly dross which it has contracted. And this notion renders the doctrine of the resurrection intelligible and philosophical.

I shall conclude the article of Pythagoras with a summary of his doctrine as it is given by St Cyril. ‘We see plainly, says this fa-

(x) 1 Cor. xv. ver. 35, 42, 50.

(y) Dr. Clarke on the being and attributes of God, p. 357, 359.

ther, that Pythagoras maintained that there was but one God, the original and cause of all things, who enlightens every thing, animates every thing, and from whom every thing proceeds, who has given being to all things, and is the source of all motion (z).

After Pythagoras comes Anaxagoras (a) of the Ionic sect, born at Clazomene, and master to Pericles the Athenian hero. This philosopher was the first after Thales in the Ionic School who perceived the necessity of introducing a supreme intelligence for the formation of the universe. He rejected with contempt, and with great strength of reason refuted the doctrine of those who held, that (b) a blind necessity and the casual motions of matter had produced the world. He endeavoured to prove that a pure and uncompounded spirit presided over the universe.

According to Aristotle's account, the reasoning of Anaxagoras was founded upon these two principles: 1. That the idea of matter not including that of active force, motion could not be one of its properties. We must therefore, said he, seek somewhere else to find out the cause of this activity. Now this active

(z) S. Cyril contra Julian. lib. 1. p. 85.

(a) Flor. Olym LXXX.

(b) Plut. vita Pericli.

principle, as it was the cause of motion, he called the soul, because it animates the universe (c). 2. He distinguished between this universal principle of motion, and the thinking principle, which last he called the understanding (d). He saw nothing in matter that had any resemblance to this property; and from thence he inferred, that there was in nature another substance besides matter. But he added, that the soul and spirit were one and the same substance distinguished by us only in regard of its different operations; and that of all essences it was the most simple, the most pure, and most exempt from all mixture and composition.' This philosopher passed at Athens for an atheist, because he denied that the stars and planets were gods (e). He maintained that the first were suns, and the latter habitable worlds; so very antient is the system of a plurality of worlds, which has been generally thought to be modern.

Plato (f) condemns Anaxagoras for having explained all the phaenomena of nature by matter and motion. Descartes has only revived this opinion. I cannot but think it very

(c) Arist. de Anim. lib. 1. cap. 2. p. 1619. Edit. Paris. 1619.

(d) Ibid. p. 260.

(e) Plat. de Legib. 10. p. 886. (f) Plat. Phaed. p. 73.

unjust to accuse the philosopher of Clazomene or his follower, of atheism, on this account since they both lay it down for a principle, that motion is not a property of matter, and consequently, that the moving force is altogether spiritual. It must nevertheless be allowed, that the French philosopher is blameable in supposing that the visible world is the necessary and unavoidable effect of a mere impulsion given to an indefinite matter. Hence it would follow

1. That the laws of motion are not arbitrary and dependent on a sovereign Intelligence who acts with wisdom and design; which totally destroys the idea of final causes. 2. That the world, such as we see it, with all its irregularities, defects and disorders, is precisely in the same state wherein it was first produced by the Creator: these two principles were the fatal source of Spinoza's atheism: believing with Descartes, that matter and extension are the same thing, and that all the different phenomena of nature are the effect of the necessary laws of motion, he presently inferred that immense extension and infinite force might be properties of the same eternal substance, which act by the immutable laws of a blind necessity.

The most sublime genius of our age, being sensible of these monstrous abuses of Cartesian



man, resolved to undermine the foundations of that philosophy. He demonstrated that the primary laws of motion are purely arbitrary, and established with knowledge and design by an intelligent Architect, in order to the preservation of his work, and the accomplishment of such ends as are worthy of his wisdom. It is with great injustice that this philosopher has been accused with throwing us back into the occult qualities of the Peripatetics. I confess indeed that the obscure and confused ideas which abound in the writings of some of his disciples, have given too much occasion to certain foreigners to reject the philosophy of Sir Isaac Newton, at the same time that they admire his geometry; but it is clear from his (*g*) first writings that he never considered attraction as a cause, but only as an effect, and that he always supposed that this effect might be produced by impulsion (*h*). Provided we reject the absolute plenum of the Cartesians, their romantic elements, and their celestial vortices

(*g*) *Vis centripeta est, qua corpora versus punctum ali-  
quid tanquam ad centrum undique trahuntur, impelluntur  
vel utrinque tendunt.* Phil. Nat. Princ. p. 2.

(*h*) *Quam ego attractionem appello, fieri sane potest ut ea  
efficiatur impulsu, vel alio aliquo modo nobis ignoto.* Opt. Ed.  
Lat. pag. 380.

which are by no means geometrical, this incomparable philosopher (i) admits that there may be a subtle spirit, or ethereal matter diffused through all the immense spaces, to be the universal cause and spring of all the motions of the celestial and terrestrial bodies; of elasticity, electricity, cohesion, fluidity, vegetation and sensation; or the emission, refraction and reflection of light, and even of attraction itself, which he looks upon as the immediate cause of the most part of natural effects. He would not however pretend to explain the laws of this ethereal fluid for want of a sufficient number of experiments to prove them. It was an essential principle with him, that natural philosophy should be founded upon experiments, and that these should afterwards be applied to geometry, in order to gather from thence something more to be depended upon than ingenious conjectures. His writings discover a wonderful sagacity, penetration and depth, and all the marks of a solid understanding, which allows nothing to imagination in matters of reason; and though Descartes must be granted to have surpassed him in perspicuity and method, he was unquestionably neither so profound nor so geometrical a genius, and gave a greater loose to imagination.

(i) Phil. Nat. Princ. pag. ult. Opt. pag. 359

Socrates (*k*) follows close after Anaxagoras. The common notion is, that he was a martyr for the Unity of the Godhead, in having refused to pay his homage to the gods of Greece; but it is a mistake. In the apology that Plato makes for this philosopher, Socrates acknowledgeth certain subordinate deities, and teaches, that the stars and the sun are animated by intelligences who ought to be worshipped with divine honours. The same Plato in his dialogue upon holiness (*l*) tells us, that Socrates was not punished for denying that there were inferior gods, but for declaiming openly against the poets who ascribed human passions and enormous crimes to those deities.

Socrates, however, whilst he supposed several inferior gods, admitted all the while but only one eternal Principle. Xenophon has left us an excellent abridgment of the Theology of that philosopher. 'Tis perhaps the most important piece we have of antiquity. It contains the conversation of Socrates with Aristodemus, who doubted of the existence of God. Socrates makes him at first take notice of all the characters of design, of art, of the wisdom that appear all over the universe, and parti-

(*k*) Floruit Olymp. XC.

(*l*) Plat. Eutyph. p. 5. et 6.

cularly in the mechanism of the human body. (m) Do you believe then, says he to Aristodemus, can you believe that you are the only intelligent being? You know that you possess but a little particle of that matter which composes the world, a small portion of that water which moistens it, a spark of that flame which animates it. Is understanding peculiar to you alone? have you engrossed and confined it to yourself, that it is to be found no where else? does blind chance work every thing, and is there no such thing as wisdom besides what you have? Aristodemus having replied, that he did not see that wise Architect of the Universe; Socrates answers him, Neither do you see the soul which governs your own body, and regulates all its motions. You might as well conclude, that you do nothing yourself with design and reason, as maintain that every thing is done by blind chance in the universe. Aristodemus at length acknowledging a supreme Being, is still in doubt as to Providence; not being able to comprehend how the Deity can see every thing at once. Socrates replies, If the spirit that resides in your body moves and disposes it at its pleasure, why should not that

‘sovereign Wisdom which presides over the  
‘universe, be able likewise to regulate and or-  
‘der every thing as it pleases? if your eye can  
‘see objects at the distance of several furlongs;  
‘why should not the eye of God be able to see  
‘every thing at once? If your soul can think  
‘at the same time upon what is at Athens, in  
‘Egypt, and in Sicily; why should not the di-  
‘vine Mind be able to take care of every thing,  
‘being every where present to his work?’ So-  
crates perceiving at last that the infidelity of  
Aristodemus did not arise so much from his  
reason as from his heart, concludes with these  
words; ‘O Aristodemus, apply yourself sin-  
‘cerely to worship God; he will enlighten  
‘you, and all your doubts will soon be remov-  
‘ed!’

Plato, a disciple of Socrates, follows the same  
principles. He lived about the hundredth O-  
lympiad, at a time when the doctrine of De-  
mocritus had made a great progress at Athens.  
The design of all his Theology is to give us  
noble sentiments of the Deity, to shew us that  
souls are condemned to animate mortal bodies,  
only in order to expiate faults they had com-  
mitted in a pre-existent state, and, in fine, to  
teach that religion is the only way to restore  
us to our first glory and perfection. He de-

spises all the tenets of the Athenian superstition, and endeavours to purge religion of them. The chief object of this philosopher is man in his immortal capacity: he speaks of him in his politic one, only to shew that the shortest way to immortality is to discharge all the duties of civil and social life for the pure love of virtue.

Plato in the beginning of his *Timæus* distinguishes between being which is eternally, and being which has been made (*n*). And in another of his dialogues he defines God the efficient cause which makes things exist that had no being before (*o*): a definition which shews that he had an idea of creation. Nor is it at all surprizing that he should have this idea, since it implies no contradiction. In reality, when God creates he does not draw a being out of nothing, as out of a subject upon which he works; but he makes something exist which did not exist before. The idea of infinite power necessarily supposes that of being able to produce new substances as well as new forms

(*n*) Τι το ου μιν αιει γενεσιν δε ουκ εχον' και το γεγνημενον μιν ου δε ουδεποτε.

(*o*) Ποιητικην πασαν εφαιμεν ειναι δυναμιν η τις αιτια γιγνηται τοις μη προτερον ουσιν υσιν γιγνησθαι. Plat. Sophist. pag. 185. Ed. Franc. 1602.



To make a substance exist which did not exist before, has nothing in it more inconceivable than the making a form exist which was not before; for in both cases there is a new reality produced; and whatever difficulties there are in conceiving the passage from nothing to being, they are as puzzling in the one as in the other. As therefore it cannot be denied but that there is a moving power, though we do not conceive how it acts; so neither must we deny that there is a creating power, because we have not a clear idea of it.

To return to Plato. He first considers the Deity in his eternal solitude before the production of finite beings. He says frequently like the Egyptians, 'That this first source of Deity is surrounded with thick darkness, which no mortal can penetrate, and that this inaccessible God is to be adored only by silence.' 'Tis this first Principle which he calls in several places the Being, the Unity, and the supreme Good (*p*); the same in the intelligent world, that the sun is in the visible world. He afterwards represents to us this first Being as falling out of his unity to consider all the various manners by which he might represent himself exteriorly; and thus the i-

(p) De Repub. lib. 6. 886.

deal world, comprehending the ideas of all things, and the truths which result thence was formed in the Divine Understanding. Plato always distinguishes between the supreme Good, and that Wisdom which is only an emanation from him. ' That which presents truth to the mind, says he, and that which gives us reason, is the supreme Good. He is the cause and source of truth (q). He hath begotten it like himself. As the light is not the sun, but an emanation from it; so truth is not the first Principle, but his emanation. And this is what he calls the Wisdom or the Logos. And lastly, he considers the first Mover displaying his power to form real beings, resembling those archetypal ideas. He stile him, (r) The Energy, or sovereign Architect, who created the universe and the gods, and who does whatsoever he pleaseth in heaven, on the earth, and in the shades below. He calls him likewise Psyche, or the soul, which presides over the world, rather than

(q) De Repub. lib. 6. p. 687. Τούτοι τοι φαναι με λίσσιν του του ασαδου εκουτου οτ τα ασαδου εστιν αναλογον αυτω.

(r) Plat. de Repub. lib. 10. p. 749. δημιουργοι and not δημιουργουμενοι, ψυχη υπερχοσμιας, and not ερχοσμιας.

the soul of the world; to denote that this soul does not make a part of the universe, but animates it, and gives all its forms and movements. Sometimes he considers the three divine attributes as three causes, at other times as three beings, and often as three gods: but he affirms, that they are all but one sole divinity; that there is no essential difference between them; that the second is the image of the first, and the third of the second; that they are not three suns, but one: and that they differ only in the light, its rays, and the reflexion of those rays (f).

In other places, and especially in the *Timæus* Locrus (t), Plato speaks of three other principles which he calls, ἰδέα. ὕλη. ἀσθεντος; by the first he understands the archetypal ideas contained in the divine Intellect: by the second, a primary matter, incorruptible, eternal, uniform, without figure or division, but capable of receiving all forms and motions: by the third, the visible universe, bounded, corruptible, consisting of various parts; and this he styles the son, the effect and the work of the idea as the primitive father, and of the

(f) See Cudworth *Intellect. Syst.* from p. 580. to p. 600.

(t) *Tim. Loc.* p. 1039.

ΥΧΗ, as the universal mother of whatever exists. We ought never to confound these three principles of nature with the three forms of the Divinity, which he calls Agathos, Logos and Psyche; the sovereign Good, which is the principle of Deity, the Intellect which drew the plan of the world, and the Energy which executed it.

Though we should suppose that Plato considered the Logos and the Psyche, the Intellect and the Energy, not only as two attributes but as two hypostases, or emanations from the divine Substance, it would not follow that the Christians took their doctrine of the Trinity from him. He might owe this idea to the ancient traditions transmitted from the infant world, whence the Orientals, Chaldeans, Egyptians and Greeks, originally drew the fondest notions in divinity. The philosophers of all nations seem to have had some idea more or less confused, of a certain triplicity of the supreme Unity (*u*). Christianity has only unfolded this ancient doctrine. It teaches that in the divine Essence there is a triple distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that the actions of the one are not the actions

(*u*) Plot. Enn. v. l. 1. See Cudworth's Intell. Syst. fr. page 570. to 630.

the other; that the Father exists of himself, independently, as the primitive source of Deity; that the Son comes forth from the Father by an incomprehensible generation; and the Holy Spirit from both by an inconceivable procession; and lastly, that these two emanations from the divinity are necessary, co-eternal, consubstantial, infinite, and in all things equal to the Father, his independence only excepted. The church has been pleased to express this distinction by the word Persons; to denote that this Trinity is not a mere division of attributes, as the Sabellians hold; nor yet three different substances, as the Tritheists maintain. We have not a sufficiently clear idea of the eternal Nature to be able to deny, but it may admit of such a distinction. As to finite beings, indeed, the only distinction we know in them, is that of modes and substances; but is this a reason to deny the possibility of another in the infinite Essence? ignorance may be a reason for doubting, but never for denying.

In order to silence the credulous, and make this mystery intelligible to them, a famous (x) doctor of the church of England, and, as I am assured, the greatest philosopher (y) of modern times, believed that it would do no prejudice

(x) Dr Clarke,

(y) Sir Isaac Newton.

to the faith to consider the three Persons of the Trinity as three individual Agents, or three distinct Beings, though of the same substance. This opinion is as far above Arianism as Arianism is above Socinianism. Fausto Socini maintained, that the Son had never any existence before the incarnation. Arius held, that he was created or produced out of nothing like finite beings, but yet from all eternity, that is before all time. The learned Dr Clarke maintains every where, that the Word is not a creature, but an emanation from the Father, co-eternal and consubstantial; that this emanation is as essential to the Deity as his veracity; that it is not possible for the Father to be without the Son, in any other sense than it is possible for God to lie (z); and consequently that the Word is not a precarious being which God may annihilate.

I will not pretend to justify any inconsiderate expressions which may have dropt from the Doctor; we find such in the Fathers themselves: but charity, which thinks no evil, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, will never insist upon the literal import of unguarded words, which are disavowed, must nevertheless be granted that this doctrine

(z) Observations on Dr Waterland's Queries, p. 75.



which is ascribed originally to Sir Isaac Newton, explains nothing, and only plunges us in new difficulties greater than the first. There may easily be many distinct beings, of the same indivisible and finite substance; but it is impossible to conceive three distinct beings of the infinite and indivisible substance, without destroying his nature, and discerning the living and true God. Is it not better contentedly to join with all Christian antiquity, in saying, that there is a triple distinction, real but incomprehensible in the Divinity, than to disturb the peace of the church with defining the metaphysical nature of this distinction, by such ideas as lead to Tritheism, contrary to the intention of those who advance them? How easily are the most extensive geniuses led astray, when they shake off the yoke of authority, to give themselves up to their speculations? But to proceed.

Aristotle, Plato's disciple, and prince of the Peripatetic philosophers, calls God, (a) 'The eternal and living Being, the most noble of all beings, a substance entirely distinct from matter, without extension, without division, without parts, and without succession; who

(a) Arist. Ed. Paris. 1629. Metaph. lib. xiv. cap. 7.

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'understands every thing by one single act,  
 'and continuing himself immoveable, gives  
 'motion to all things, and enjoys in himself a  
 'perfect happiness, as knowing and contem-  
 'plating himself with infinite pleasure.' In  
 his metaphysics he lays it down for a principle,  
 (b) 'That God is a supreme intelligence which  
 'acts with order, proportion and design; and  
 'is the source of all that is good, excellent and  
 'just.' In his treatise of the soul, he says,  
 'That the supreme Mind (c) is by its nature  
 'prior to all beings, that he has a sovereign  
 'dominion over all.' And in other places he  
 says, (d) 'That the first principle is neither  
 'the fire, nor the earth, nor the water, nor a-  
 'ny thing that is the object of sense: but that  
 'a spiritual substance is the cause of the uni-  
 'verse, and the source of all the order and all  
 'the beauties, as well as of all the motions and  
 'all the forms which we so much admire in  
 'it.' These passages shew that though Ari-  
 stotle held matter to be eternal, he neverthe-  
 less considered it as a production of the divine  
 intellect, and posterior in nature to it. He  
 supposed the eternity of this production, be-

(b) Metaph. lib. xiv. cap. 10. p. 1005. (c) Id. de An-  
 nim. lib. 1. cap. 7. p. 628. (d) Metaph. lib. 1. cap. 2.  
 & 3. p. 844. 845.

cause he could not conceive how the divine mind, being all act, and all energy, could ever be in a state of inactivity. Besides this first and eternal substance, he acknowledges several other intelligent beings that preside over the motions of the celestial spheres. 'There is, says he, but one only Mover, and several inferior deities. (c) All that is added about the human shape of these deities, is nothing else but fiction, invented on purpose to instruct the common people, and engage them to an observation of good laws. All must be reduced to one only primitive substance, and to several inferior substances, which govern in subordination to the first. This is the genuine doctrine of the ancients, which has happily escaped from the wreck of truth, amidst the rocks of vulgar errors and poetic fables.'

Cicero lived in an age when corruption of manners and scepticism were at their height. The sect of Epicurus had got the ascendant at Rome over that of Pythagoras; and some of the greatest men, when they were reasoning about the divine nature, thought fit to suspend their judgment, and waver between the two opinions of a supreme intelligence and a blind

(c) Met. lib. xiv. cap. 8. p. 1003.

matter. Cicero, in his treatise of the nature of the Gods, pleads the cause of the academic philosophers who doubted of every thing. It is however to be observed, that he refutes Epicurus with great force of reason in his first book, and that the objections which he makes in his third, as an academic, are much weaker than the proofs which he draws from the wonders that appear in nature, which he insists on in his second book, to demonstrate the existence of a supreme intelligence.

In his other works, and particularly in his book of laws, he describes the universe to us (f) as a republic of which Jupiter is the prince and common father. The great law imprinted in the hearts of all men is to love the public good, and the members of the common society as themselves. This love of order is supreme justice, and this justice is admirable for its own sake. To love it only for the advantages it produces us, may be politic, but there is little of goodness in it. 'Tis the highest injustice to love justice only for the sake of recompence. In a word, the universal, immutable and eternal law of all intelligent beings, is to promote the happi-

(f) Cic. de Leg. Ed. Amst. 1661. lib. 1. p. 1188. 1191, &c.

ness of one another like children of the same father.' He next represents God to us as a sovereign wisdom, from whose authority it is still more impracticable for intelligent natures to withdraw themselves than it is for corporeal ones (g). 'According to the opinions of the wisest and greatest men, says this philosopher, the law is not an invention of human understanding, or the arbitrary constitution of men, but flows from the eternal reason that governs the universe. The rape which Tarquin committed upon Lucretia, continues he, was not less criminal in its nature, because there was not at that time any written law at Rome against such sort of violences. The tyrant was guilty of a breach of the eternal law, the obligation whereof did not commence from the time it was written, but from the moment it was made. Now its origin is as ancient as the divine Intellect: for the true, the primitive, and the supreme law, is nothing else but the sovereign reason of the great Jove. This law, says he in another place (h), is universal, eternal, immutable. It does not vary according to times and places.

(g) Cic. de Leg. lib. 2. p. 1194.

(h) Frag. of the Repub. of Cicero preserved by Lactantius, lib. vi. c. 8.

‘ It is not different from what it was formerly.  
 ‘ The same immortal law is a rule to all nati-  
 ‘ ons, because it has no author but the one on-  
 ‘ ly God who brought it forth and promulged  
 ‘ it.’ Such were the reasonings of Cicero when  
 he consulted natural light, and was not carried  
 away by a fondness of shewing his wit in de-  
 fending the doctrine of the Sceptics.

To come at last to Seneca the Stoic. He  
 was Nero’s tutor, and lived in an age when  
 Christianity was not in credit enough to en-  
 gage the Heathens to borrow any philosophi-  
 cal principles from thence. ‘ (i) ’Tis of very  
 ‘ little consequence, says he, by what name you  
 ‘ call the first Nature, and the divine reason  
 ‘ that presides over the universe, and fills all  
 ‘ the parts of it. He is still the same God.  
 ‘ He is called Jupiter Stator, not, as historians  
 ‘ say, because he stopped the Roman armies as  
 ‘ they were flying, but because he is the con-  
 ‘ stant support of all beings. They may call  
 ‘ him Fate, because he is the first cause on  
 ‘ which all others depend. We Stoics call him  
 ‘ sometimes Father Bacchus, because he is the  
 ‘ universal life that animates nature ; Hercu-  
 ‘ les, because his power is invincible ; Mercury,

(i) Senec. Edit. Ant. a Lipsio 1634. de Benef. lib. iv. p.



'because he is the eternal Reason, Order and  
'Wisdom. You may give him as many names  
'as you please, provided you allow but one sole  
'Principle every where present.'

Agreeably to Plato's notions, he considers  
the divine Understanding as comprehending in  
itself the model of all things, which he styles  
the immoveable and almighty ideas. (k). \* E-  
'very workman, says he, hath a model by  
'which he forms his work. It signifies nothing  
'whether this model exists outwardly and be-  
'fore his eyes or be formed within him by the  
'strength of his own genius: so God produces  
'within himself that perfect model, which is  
'the proportion, the order, and the beauty of  
'all beings. (l) The ancients, says he in ano-  
'ther place, did not think Jove such a being  
'as we represent him in the Capitol, and in our  
'other buildings. But by Jove they meant  
'the guardian and governor of the universe,  
'the understanding and the mind, the Master  
'and the Architect of this great machine. All  
'names belong to him. You are not in the  
'wrong if you call him Fate, for he is the  
'cause of causes, and every thing depends on  
'him. Would you call him Providence; you

(k) Senec. Epist. 65. p. 493.

(l) Ibid. Natur. quæst. lib. 2. p. 715.

‘fall into no mistake, it is by his wisdom that  
‘this world is governed. Would you call him  
‘Nature; you will not offend in doing so, it is  
‘from him all beings derive their origin, it is  
‘by him that they live and breathe.’

There is no reading the works of Epictetus,  
of Arrian, his disciple, and of Marcus Antonius  
without admiration. We find in them rules  
of morality worthy of Christianity; and yet  
those disciples of Zeno believed like their master,  
that there was but one Substance, that the  
supreme intelligent being was material, and  
that his essence was a pure aether which filled  
all by local diffusion; that whatever was not  
extended was nothing; and in short, that infinite  
extension was the same with the divine im-  
mensity. (m) The Platonists represented to  
them, that it was a gross imagination to suppose  
that every thing, which is, exists by local dif-  
fusion; that were it so, the divine essence would  
not be equally present every where; that there  
would be more of it in a great space than in a  
little one; that it is absurd to conceive that  
which is nothing but power, wisdom and good-  
ness, under the form of length, breadth and  
thickness; that all other beings exists in God,  
but that he exists only in himself; that immense

(m) Plat. Tim. & de leg. lib. x. Arist. de anim. lib. 1. cap.  
3. Porphy. p. 230.

space is not the divine Immenſity, as time everlaſting is not the divine eternity; that the immenſity of God is the manner of his exiſting in himſelf, without extension of parts, as his eternity is the manner of his exiſting in himſelf without ſucceſſion of thoughts; that ſpace is but the manner wherein bodies exiſt in him, as time is but the manner in which finite beings exiſts with him; that the one meaſures the bounds of the parts, and the other the variation of the modes; that we ſhould have no idea of local extension, if there were no bodies, as we ſhould have no idea of ſucceſſive duration if there were no changes: and laſtly, that indefinite unbounded extension is not immenſe in all ſenſes, as it is not infinite in all reſpects: but that God is immenſe in all ſenſes, as he is in all reſpects infinite.

It was thus that the Pagan philoſophers talked of the divine Immenſity before the riſe of ſcholastic theology. The obſcurity of our reaſonings on this matter proceeds from our want of a clear idea of ſubſtances: we neither know nor diſtinguiſh them but by their properties; otherwiſe we ſhould ſee that the ſupreme Unity may exiſt every where without extension of parts, as he exiſts for ever without ſucceſſion of thoughts; that he is all in all places, as he beholds all beings with one glance. The

reason of our not having a clear idea of the divine immensity, is our not having an adequate idea of infinity; we ascribe to him certain properties, because we see that they are contained in the idea we have of him; but we are obliged at the same time, in order to avoid absurdities, to give him other attributes which we do not comprehend. Thus in geometry we admit the infinite divisibility of matter, and the doctrine of asymptotes which follows from it, without having a clear idea of either of them.

But after all, the materialism of the Stoics does not evince that they were Atheists; a false notion about the Deity being far from proving that they believed none at all. What constitutes an Atheist, is not the maintaining with the Orientals, that matter is an expansion of the divine substance; nor with the Stoics, that the infinite essence is a pure aether; nor with the Platonists, that the universe is an eternal production of the Deity; but real Atheism consists in denying that there is a supreme intelligence, who made the world by his power, and governs it by his wisdom.

For our fuller satisfaction with regard to the theology of the heathens, let us see what the fathers of the church thought of it. They had sufficient opportunities of knowing it through-

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ly, by the frequent disputes which they held with them. As this is a matter of a very nice nature, it may be dangerous to indulge any thing to one's own conjectures: let us have recourse to wise antiquity. Arnobius (*n*) introduces the heathens complaining of the injustice of the Christians. 'Tis a mere calumny, say those heathens, to charge us with such a crime, as the denying of a supreme God. We call him Jove, the supremely great and sovereignly good; we dedicate our most magnificent structures and our capitol to him, to shew that we exalt him above all other deities. (*o*) St. Peter in his preaching at Athens, says St. Clement of Alexandria (*p*), insinuates that the Greeks had a knowledge of the Deity. He supposes that those people adore the same God, as we do, though not in the same manner. He does not forbid us to adore the same God as the Greeks, but he forbids us to adore him after the same way. He orders us to change the manner, and not the object of our worship. The heathens, says Lactantius (*q*); who admit several gods, say nevertheless that those subordinate deities, though they preside over all the various parts of the universe,

(*n*) Arnob. lib. 1. p. 19.      (*o*) An Apocryphal book which then passed under the name of St. Peter's.

(*p*) Strom, l. 6. p. 635.      (*q*) Lib. 1 p. 16.

' do it in such a manner, as that there is still  
 ' but one sole ruler and supreme governor  
 ' From whence it follows that all other invisible  
 ' powers are not properly Gods, but ministers  
 ' or deputies of the one great and almighty God  
 ' who appointed them executors of his will and  
 ' pleasure.' Eusebius of Cesarea goes farther  
 ' (r) The heathens own that there is but one  
 ' only God, who fills, pervades and pervades o-  
 ' ver universal nature; but they maintain, that  
 ' as he is present to his work only in an incor-  
 ' poreal and invisible manner, they are there-  
 ' fore in the right to worship him in his visible  
 ' and corporeal effects.' I shall conclude with  
 a famous passage of St. Austin, who reduces  
 the Polytheism of the heathens to the unity of  
 one sole Principle. (s) ' Jupiter, says this fa-  
 ' ther, is, according to the philosophers, the  
 ' soul of the world, who takes different names  
 ' according to the different effects which he pro-  
 ' duces. In the ethereal spaces he is called Ju-  
 ' piter, in the air Juno, in the sea Neptune, in  
 ' the earth Pluto, in hell Proserpina, in the ele-  
 ' ment of fire Vulcan, in the sun Phoebus, in  
 ' divination Apollo, in war Mars, in the vintage  
 ' Bacchus, in the harvest Ceres, in the forest Di-

(r) Praep. Evang. lib. 3. cap. 13. p. 105.

(s) S. Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. 4. c. 11.

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ana, and in the sciences Minerva. All that croud of gods and goddesses are only the same Jupiter, whose different powers and attributes are expressed by different names.' It is therefore evident by the testimony of prophane poets, heathen philosophers, and fathers of the church, that the Pagans acknowledged one sole supreme Deity. The Orientals, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and all nations agreed universally in teaching this truth.

About the fiftieth Olympiad, six hundred years before the Christian aera, the Greeks having lost the traditional knowledge of the Orientals, began to lay aside the doctrine of the ancients, and to reason about the divine nature from prejudices, which their senses and imagination suggested. 1. Anaximander lived at that time, and was the first who set himself to destroy the belief of a supreme intelligence, in order to account for every thing by the action of blind matter, which by necessity assumes all sorts of forms. He was followed by Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, Strato, Lucretius, and all the school of the atomical philosophers. 2. Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and all the great men of Greece opposed this impious doctrine, and endeavoured to re-establish the ancient Theology of the Orientals.

tals. These philosophers of a superior genius observing in nature motion, thought and design, and the idea of matter including none of these properties; they inferred from thence, that there was in nature another substance, besides matter. Greece being thus divided into two sects, they disputed for a long time, without either party being convinced. 3. At length about the 20 Olympiad, Pyrrho formed a third sect, whose great principle was to doubt of every thing, and determine nothing. All the Atomists, who had laboured in vain to find out a demonstration of their false principles presently struck in with the Pyrrhonian sect. They ran wildly into an universal doubting, and carried it almost to such an excess of frenzy, that they doubted of the clearest and most palpable truths. They maintained without any allegory, that every thing we see is only an illusion, and that the whole series of life is but a perpetual dream, of which those of the night are only so many images. 4. At last, Zeno set up a fourth school about the 30 Olympiad. This philosopher endeavoured to reconcile the disciples of Democritus with those of Plato, by maintaining that the first Principle was indeed an infinite wisdom, but that his essence was only a pure aether, or

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a subtle light, which diffused itself every where, to give life, motion and reason to all beings.

It is plain then that there were four sorts of philosophers among the ancients; the Atheists or Atomists, the Spiritualists, or Theists, the Materialists or Stoics, the Pyrrhonians or Academics. In these last ages the modern free-thinkers have only revived the ancient errors, disguising them under new terms.

1. Jordano Bruno, Vannini, and Spinoza have vamped up the monstrous system of Animander; and have added only some artful distinctions to impose upon weak minds. Spinoza, perceiving clearly that thought could not be an effect of matter, endeavoured to prevent all objections against the Materialists, by maintaining, that (1) extension and thought are properties of the same substance; that the ideas of objects are really nothing different from the objects themselves (2); that extension and matter are the same (3); that infinite space is the immensity of God, as infinite time is his eternity (4); and consequently that all essences are but different forms of the same substance (5).

(1) Locke of Hum. Under. p. 456.

(2) Barclay's Dialogues. (3) Descartes and Malebranche.

(4) Dr Clark's letters to Leibnitz. p. 77, 119.

(5) The Orientals and Semi-cabalistical writers.

It must nevertheless be granted, that his Atheism does not consist in these errors, since they have all been maintained by philosophers who had a sincere abhorrence of impiety. Spinoza's Atheism lies wholly in this, that he makes the one only substance, for which he contends, to act without knowledge or design.

2. Descartes, Malebranche, Poiret, Leibnitz, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr Bentley, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Cheyne, and several philosophers of a genius equally subtle and profound, have endeavoured to refute these errors, and brought arguments to support the ancient theology. Besides the proofs which are drawn from the effects, they have insisted on others drawn from the idea of the first cause. They shew plainly, that the reasons for believing are infinitely stronger than those for doubting; and that it is absurd to deny what we see clearly, because we do not see farther.

3. Mr. Hobbes, and some philosophers of more faith, Behmen, and several cabalistical writers, have revived the errors of the Stoics, and pretend that extension is the basis of all substances; that the soul differs from the body only as being more subtilized; that a spirit is but a rarified body, and a body a condensed spirit; and lastly, that the infinite Being, though indivisible, is extended

by local diffusion. 4. To conclude, there are some superficial minds, who not being able to look upon truth with a steady view, nor to weigh the degrees of evidence, nor to compare the force of proofs with that of objections, persuade themselves that the mind of man is not formed for the knowledge of truth, run headlong into an universal doubting, and fall at length into a senseless kind of Pyrrhonism, called Egomism, where every one fancies himself to be the only being that exists. The history of former times is like that of our own: human understanding takes almost the same forms in different ages, and loses its way in the same labyrinths: there are periodical diseases of the mind as well as of the body.

## PART II.

*Of the MYTHOLOGY of the PAGANS.*

MEN, left to the light of their reason alone, have always looked upon moral and physical evil as a shocking phaenomenon in the work of a Being infinitely wise, good and powerful. To account for it the philosophers have had recourse to several hypotheses. Rea-

son told them all, that what is supremely good could never produce any thing that was wicked or miserable. From hence they concluded, that souls are not now what they were at first; that they are degraded, for some fault committed by them in a former state; that this life is a state of exile and expiation; and in a word, that all beings are to be restored to their proper order. Tradition struck in with reason, and this tradition had spread over all nations certain opinions which they held in common, with regard to the three states of the world, as I shall shew in this second part, which will be a sort of abridgment of the traditional doctrine of the ancients.

I begin with the Mythology of the Greeks and Romans. All the poets speaking of the golden age, or reign of Saturn, describe it to us as an happy state, in which there were neither calamities, nor crimes, nor labour, nor pains, nor diseases, nor death (*a*). They represent, on the contrary, the iron age, as the time when physical and moral evil first appeared; then it was vices, sufferings, and all manner of evils came forth of Pandora's box,

(*a*) See Hesiod, de saccul. aureo. Orpheus apud Proclum. Theol. Plat. lib. 5. cap. 10. Lucret. lib. 5. Ovid. Metam. lib. 1. fab. 3. Virg. Georg. lib. 2. lin. 336.



and overflowed the face of the earth (*b*). They speak to us of the golden age renewed, as of a time when Astræa was to return upon earth; when justice, peace and innocence were to flourish again with their original lustre; and when every thing was to be restored to its primitive perfection (*c*). In a word, they sing on all occasions the exploits of a son of Jupiter, who was to quit his heavenly abode and live among men. They gave him different names, according to his different functions; sometimes he is Apollo fighting against Python and the Titans; sometimes he is Hercules destroying monsters and giants, and purging the earth of all their enormities and crimes; one while he is Mercury, or the messenger of Jovè, flying about every where to execute his decrees; and another while he is Perseus, delivering Andromeda or human nature, from that monster that rose out of the great deep to devour her. He is always some son of Jupiter, giving battles and gaining victories. I will not insist upon these poetical descriptions, because they may perhaps be looked upon as mere fictions, and a machinery introduced to embellish a poem, and a-

(*b*) Ovid. Met. lib. 1. fab. 4, 5, et 6. Virg. Georg. lib. 1. lin. 126. Juv. Satir. 6.

(*c*) Virg. Ecl. 4. Senec. Trag. Oedip. Act. 2.

use the mind. Allegorical explications are liable to uncertainty and mistake: so that I shall go on directly to represent the doctrine of the philosophers, particularly that of Plato, which is the source from whence Plotinus, Proclus, and the Platonists of the third century, drew their principal notions.

To begin with the dialogue of Phædo, or of immortality, and give a short analysis of it; Phædo gives his friend an account of the condition in which he saw Socrates at the time of his death. 'He quitted life, says he, with a serene joy, and a noble intrepidity.' His friends asking him the reason of it, 'I hope,' says Socrates in his answer, 'to be re-united to the good and perfect gods, and to be associated with better men than those I leave upon earth (d).' When Cebes objects to him that the soul vanishes after death like a smoke, and is entirely annihilated, Socrates sets himself to refute that opinion, and endeavours to prove that the soul had a real existence (e) in an happy state, before it informed any human body. This doctrine he ascribes to Orpheus (f). 'The disciples of Orpheus, says he, called the body a prison, because the soul is here in a state of punishment till it has expiated the faults that

(d) P. 48, 51. (e) P. 57. (f) Plat. Cratyl. p. 276.

'it committed in heaven. Souls, continued Pla-  
 'to, that are too much given to bodily plea-  
 'sures, and are in a manner besotted, wander  
 'upon the earth, and are put into new bodies  
 '(g); for all sensuality and passion cause the  
 'soul to have a stronger attachment to the  
 'body, make her fancy that she is of the same  
 'nature, and render her in a manner corporeal;  
 'so that she contracts an incapacity of flying a-  
 'way into another life. Being oppressed with  
 'the weight of her impurity and corruption,  
 'she sinks again into matter, and becomes there-  
 'by disabled to remount towards the regions  
 'of purity, and attain to re-union with her  
 'principle.'

Upon this foundation is built the doctrine of  
 the transmigration of souls, which Plato repre-  
 sents in the second *Timæus* as an allegory, and  
 at other times as a thing real, where souls that  
 have made themselves unworthy of the supreme  
 beatitude, sojourn and suffer successively in the  
 bodies of different animals, till at last they are  
 purged of their crimes by the pains they un-  
 dergo. This hath made some philosophers be-  
 lieve that the souls of beasts are degraded spi-  
 rits. A very antient doctrine, and common to  
 all the Asiatics, from whom Pythagoras and

(g) *Phaed.* p. 61, 62, 63.

Plato derived it; but the poets had much debased it by their fictions. They supposed that there was an universal and eternal metempsychosis; that all spirits were subjected to it, without ever arriving at any fixed state. The philosophers, on the contrary, believed that none but depraved souls were destined to such a transmigration, and that it would one day be at an end, when they were purified from their crimes (*b*).

The Pythagoreans and Platonists not being able to persuade themselves that the brutes were absolutely insensible of pleasure and pain, or that matter was capable of sensation and consciousness, or that the divine justice could inflict sufferings on intelligences that had never offended, thought the doctrine of transmigration less absurd than that of mere machines, material souls, or pure intelligences, formed only to animate the bodies of beasts.

The first of these opinions is altogether contrary to experience; and though we may by general and ingenious hypotheses throw a mist before our eyes, yet whenever we examine nicely into all appearances of sensation discernible in beasts we can never seriously doubt of it. I do not say the appearances of reflection, but of

(*b*) See Cudw. Intel. Syst. p. 314.

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sensation; I am not unaware that in our own bodies we have frequent motions of which we are not conscious, and which nevertheless seem to be the effect of the most exact and geometrical reasoning. I speak therefore of the marks of pleasure and pain which we observe in the brutes; and I think that we can have no pretence to reject such evidence, unless it be that we do not feel what happens to them; but then, for the same reason, we might believe, that all other men are machines. The second opinion, which is that of material souls, held by the Peripatetics, tends to destroy all the proofs of the immateriality of our spirits. If matter be capable of sensation, it may likewise be capable of reflecting upon its own sensations, and the Materialists will gain their point. The third opinion destroys all our fondest notions of the Deity, by supposing that God can create beings which shall be immediately unhappy, without any previous demerit on their part, degrade pure intelligences without any reason, and when they for a while have acted in mortal bodies a part much below the dignity of their nature, reduce them again to nothing.

I will venture to say that the doctrine of transmigration is less repugnant not only to

reason and experience, but likewise to religion, than either of the other three. We see in the (i) sacred oracles that impure spirits may desire sometimes to enter into the bodies of the vilest animals. After all, a true philosopher will be prudently sceptical, with regard to all uncertain conjectures. The only use I would make of what has been above advanced, is to shew the incredulous that they say nothing to the purpose against us, when they maintain that our souls die like those of the brutes; and farther, that the fictions of the ancients, how absurd soever they at first appear, are often more defensible than the systems of the moderns, which are so much admired for a depth of penetration.

To return to Plato: 'Pure souls, adds he in his *Phædo*, that have exerted themselves here below to get the better of all corruption, and free themselves from the impurities of their terrestrial prison, retire after death into an invisible place, unknown to us, where the pure unite with the pure, the good cleaves to its like, and our immortal essence is united to the divine.' He calls this place the first earth where souls made their abode before their degradation. 'The earth, says he, is immense;

(i) St. Luke chap. viii.



'we know and we inhabit only a small corner  
'of it (*k*). That ethereal earth, the antient  
'abode of souls, is placed in the pure region of  
'heaven, where the stars are seated. We that  
'live in this low abyfs are apt enough to fancy  
'that we are in an high place, and we call the  
'air the heavens; just like a man that from  
'the bottom of the sea should view the sun and  
'stars through the water, and fancy the ocean  
'to be the firmament itself. But if we had  
'wings to mount on high, we should see that  
'there is the true heaven, the true light, and  
'the true earth. As in the sea every thing is  
'altered, and disfigured by the salts that a-  
'bound in it; so in our present earth every  
'thing is deformed, corrupted, and in a ruin-  
'ous condition, if compared with the primitive  
'earth.' Plato gives afterwards a pompous  
description of that ethereal earth, of which  
ours is only a broken crust. He says (*l*) 'that  
'every thing there was beautiful, harmonious  
'and transparent; fruits of an exquisite taste  
'grew there naturally; and it was watered  
'with rivers of nectar. They there breathed  
'the light, as we here breathe the air, and they  
'drank waters which were purer than air it-  
'self.' This notion of Plato agrees in a great

(*k*) P. 81.(*l*) P. 82.

measure with that of Descartes, about the nature of the planets: this modern philosopher was of opinion that they were at first suns which contracted afterwards a thick and opaque crust.

This same doctrine of Plato is likewise clearly explained in his *Timæus* (*m*). There he tells us how Solon in his travels discoursed with an Egyptian priest about the antiquity of the world, its origin, and the revolutions which had happened in it according to the Mythology of the Greeks. Upon which the Egyptian priest says to him, 'O Solon, you Greeks are always children, and you never come to an age of maturity; your understanding is young and has no true knowledge of antiquity. There have been upon earth several deluges and conflagrations, caused by the changes in the motion of the heavenly bodies. Your history of Phaeton, whatever air it has of a fable, is nevertheless not without a real foundation. We Egyptians have preserved the memory of these facts in our monuments and temples; whereas it is but a very little while that the Greeks have had any knowledge of letters, of the muses, and of the sciences.' This discourse put *Timæus* upon explaining to Socras

(*m*) *Tim.* p. 1043.

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tes the origin of things, and the primitive state of the world (u). 'Whatever has been produced, says he, has been produced by some cause. 'Tis no easy matter to know the nature of this Maker, and father of the universe; and though you should discover it, it would be impossible for you to make the vulgar comprehend it. This architect of the world, continues he, had a model by which he produced every thing, and this model is himself. As he is good, and what is good has not the least tincture of envy, he made all things as far as was possible like himself. He made the world perfect in the whole of its constitution, perfect too in all the various parts that compose it, which were subject neither to diseases, nor to decay of age. The Father of all things, beholding this beautiful image of himself, took a complacency in his work, and this complacency raised in him a desire of improving it to a nearer likeness to its Model.'

In the dialogue which bears the title of Politicus, Plato mentioning this primitive state of the world calls it the reign of Saturn, and describes it in this manner (o), 'God was then the Prince and common Father of all; he go-

(u) P. 1047.

(o) P. 537, 538.

' vernal the world by himself, as he governs  
 ' it now by inferior deities: rage and cruelty  
 ' did not then prevail upon earth; war and  
 ' sedition were not so much as known. God  
 ' himself took care of the sustenance of man-  
 ' kind, and was their guardian and shepherd:  
 ' There were no magistrates, no civil polity as  
 ' there are now. In those happy days men  
 ' sprung out of the bosom of the earth, which  
 ' produced them of itself, like flowers and trees.  
 ' The fertile fields yielded fruits and corn  
 ' without the labour of tillage. Mankind  
 ' stood in no need of raiment to cover their  
 ' bodies, being troubled with no inclemency  
 ' of the seasons; they took their rest upon  
 ' beds of turf of a perpetual verdure. Under  
 ' the reign of Jupiter, Saturn, the master of the  
 ' universe, having quitted as it were the reins  
 ' of his empire, hid himself in an inaccessible  
 ' retreat. The inferior gods who governed  
 ' under him retired likewise; the very founda-  
 ' tions of the world were shaken by motions  
 ' contrary to its principle and its end, and it  
 ' lost its beauty and its lustre. Then it was  
 ' that good and evil were blended together.  
 ' But in the end, lest the world should be plung-  
 ' ed in an eternal abyfs of confusion, God, the  
 ' author of the primitive order, will appear a-

gain and resume the reins of empire. Then  
 'he will change, amend, embellish and restore  
 'the whole frame of nature, and put an end  
 'to decay of age, to diseases and death.'

In the dialogue under the title of Phædrus,  
 Plato more distinctly unfolds the secret causes  
 of moral evil, which brought in physical evil.

'(p) There are in every one of us, says he,  
 'two principal springs of action, the desire of  
 'pleasure, and the love of virtue, which are  
 'the wings of the soul. When these wings  
 'are parted, when the love of pleasure and  
 'the love of virtue carry us contrary ways,  
 'then souls fall down into mortal bodies.'

Let us see here his notion of the pleasures  
 which spirits taste in heaven, and of the man-  
 ner how souls fell from the happy state which  
 they enjoyed there. '(q) The great Jupiter,  
 'says he, animating his winged chariot, mar-  
 'ches first, followed by all the inferior gods  
 'and genii; thus they traverse the heavens  
 'admiring the infinite wonders thereof. But  
 'when they go to the great banquet, they raise  
 'themselves to the top of heaven, and mount  
 'above the spheres. None of our poets ever  
 'yet sung, or can sing that super-celestial

(p) Pag. 1216.

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(q) Pag. 1222

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place (r). It is there that souls contemplate with the eyes of the understanding, the truly existing essence, which has neither colour nor figure, nor is the object of any sense, but is purely intelligible. There they see virtue, truth and justice, not as they are here below, but as they exist in him who is Being itself. There they satiate themselves with that sight till they are no longer able to bear the glory of it, and then they return back to heaven, where they feed again on nectar and ambrosia. Such is the life of the gods. Now, continues Plato (f), every soul which follows God faithfully into that super-celestial place, preserves itself pure and without blemish; but if it takes up with nectar and ambrosia, and does not attend on Jupiter's chariot to go and contemplate truth, it grows heavy and sluggish, it breaks its wings, it falls upon the earth, and enters into a human body more or less vile, according as it has been more or less elevated. Souls less degraded than others dwell in the bodies of philosophers. The most despicable of all animate the bodies of tyrants and evil princes. Their condition alters after death, and becomes more or less happy according as they have

(r) Ἰπερουρανίος τόπος. (f) Pag. 1223.

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loved virtue or vice in their life-time. After ten thousand years souls will be re-united to their origin. During that space of time their wings grow again and are renewed (1).

Such was the doctrine which Plato opposed to the prophane sect of Democritus and Epicurus, who denied an eternal providence on account of the physical and moral evil which they saw in the world. This philosopher gives us a fine description of the universe: he considers it as an immensity filled with free spirits, which inhabit and inform innumerable worlds. These spirits are qualified to enjoy a double felicity; the one consisting in the contemplation of the divine essence, the other in admiring his works. When souls no longer make their felicity consist in the knowledge of truth, and when lower pleasures turn them off from the love of the supreme essence, they are thrown down into some planet, there to undergo expiatory punishments till they are cured by their sufferings. These planets are consequently, according to Plato's notion, like hospitals or (u) places instituted for the cure of distempered in-

(1) This doctrine of Plato's concerning the fall and re-formation of souls is explained by Macrobius in his commentary on Scipio's dream, chap. ii. 12, 13.

(u) Νεσοχομῖαι.

telligences. Such is the inviolable law established (x) for the preservation of order in the celestial spheres. This double employment of the heavenly spirits is one of the sublimest notions of Plato, and shews the wonderful depth of his genius. It was the system adopted by the Heathen philosophers, whenever they attempted to explain to us the origin of evil; and thus they reason. If souls could without intermission contemplate the divine essence by a direct view, they would be impeccable, the sight of the supreme good necessarily engaging all the love of the will. To explain therefore the fall of spirits, they are forced to suppose an interval, when the soul withdraws from the divine presence, and quits the super-celestial abode in order to admire the beauties of nature, and entertain herself with ambrosia, as a food less delicate, and more suitable to a finite being. It is in these intervals that she becomes false to her duty.

Pythagoras had learned the same doctrine among the Egyptians. We have still a very valuable monument of it left in the commentary of Hierocles upon the golden verses ascribed to that philosopher (y). 'As our alienation

(u) *Θεομορφος Ἀδελφότης*.

(y) Hierocl. Comm. in aurea Carm. p. 187. Edit. Cant. 1709.

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\*from God, says this author, and the loss of  
\*the wings which used to raise us up to hea-  
\*venly things, has thrown us down into this  
\*region of death, which is over-run with all  
\*manner of evils; so the stripping ourselves of  
\*earthly affections, and the revival of virtues  
\*in us make our wings grow again, and raise  
\*us up to the mansions of life, where true good  
\*is to be found without any mixture of evil.  
\*The essence of man being in the middle be-  
\*tween things that contemplate God without  
\*ceasing, and such as are not able to contem-  
\*plate him at all, he has it in his power to  
\*raise himself up towards the one, or sink  
\*down towards the other (z).’ ‘The wicked  
\*man, says Hierocles in another place, does  
\*not care that the soul should be immortal,  
\*for fear he should live after death only to  
\*suffer punishment. But the judges of the  
\*shades below, as they form their judgment  
\*upon the rules of truth, do not decree, that  
\*the soul should exist no longer, but that it  
\*should be no longer vicious. Their business  
\*is to correct and cure it, by prescribing pu-  
\*nishments for the health of nature, just as  
\*physicians heal the most inveterate ulcers by  
\*incisions. These judges punish the crime in

(z) Ibid, Carm, 120.

‘order to extirpate vice. They do not annihilate the essence of the soul, but bring it back to its true and genuine existence, purifying it from all the passions that corrupt it. And therefore when we have sinned, we should be glad to embrace the punishment as the only remedy for vice.’

It is therefore evidently the doctrine of the most famous Greek philosophers, 1. That souls had a pre-existence in heaven. 2. That the Jupiter who marched at the head of souls before the loss of their wings, is distinct from the supreme essence, and is very like the Mythras of the Persians, and the Orus of the Egyptians. 3. That souls lost their wings, and were thrust down into mortal bodies, because that instead of following Jupiter’s chariot, they gave themselves too much up to the enjoyment of lower pleasures. 4. That at the end of a certain period of time, the wings of the soul shall grow again, and Saturn shall resume the reins of his empire, in order to restore the universe to its original splendor.

Let us now examine the Egyptian Mythology, the source from whence that of the Greeks was derived. I shall not offer to maintain the mystical explications that Kircher gives of the famous table of Isis, and of the obelisks that

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are to be seen at Rome : I confine myself to Plutarch, who has preserved to us an admirable monument of that Mythology. To represent it in its real beauties, it will be proper to give a short and clear analysis of his treatise of Isis and Osiris, which is a letter written to Clea, priestess of Isis. “(a) The Egyptian Mythology, says Plutarch, has two senses, ‘the one sacred and sublime, the other sensible and palpable.’ ‘Tis for this reason that the Egyptians put Sphinxes before the door of their temples; designing thereby to signify to us that their theology contains the secrets of wisdom under enigmatical words. This is also the sense of the inscription upon a statue of Pallas or Isis, at Saïas, *I am all that is, has been, and shall be, and no mortal has ever yet removed the veil that covers me.*’ (b) He afterwards relates the Egyptian fable of Isis and Osiris. They were both born of Rhea and the Sun; whilst they were still in their mother’s womb, they jointly engendered the God Orus the living image of their substance. Typhon was not born, but burst violently through the ribs of Rhea. He afterwards revolted against Osiris, filled the universe with his rage and violence, tore the body of

(a) Pag 354.

(b) Pag. 365.

his brother in pieces, mangled his limbs, and  
 scattered them about. Ever since that time  
 Isis goes wandering about the earth to gather  
 up the scattered limbs of her brother and  
 husband. The eternal and immortal soul of  
 Osiris led his son Orus to the shades below,  
 where he gave him instructions how to fight,  
 and vanquish Typhon. Orus returned upon  
 earth, fought and defeated Typhon, but did  
 not kill him; he only bound him, and took  
 away his power of doing mischief. The  
 wicked one made his escape afterwards, and  
 was going to throw all again into disorder.  
 But Orus fought him in two bloody battles,  
 and destroyed him entirely. Plutarch goes  
 on thus: (c) 'Whoever applieth these alle-  
 gories to the divine nature, ever blessed and  
 immortal, deserves to be treated with con-  
 tempt. We must not however believe that  
 they are mere fables without any meaning,  
 like those of the poets. They represent to  
 us things that really happened. It would be  
 likewise a dangerous error, and manifest im-  
 piety, to interpret what is said of the gods,  
 as Evemerus the Messenian did, and apply it  
 to the ancient kings and great generals.  
 This would in the end serve to destroy reli-



gion, and estrange men from the Deity (d).  
 There are others, adds he, much jultier in  
 their notions, who have wrote, that what-  
 ever is related of Typhon, Osiris, Isis and O-  
 rus, must be understood of genii and dæmons.  
 (e) This was the opinion of Pythagoras, Pla-  
 to, Xenocrates, and Chrysippus, who follow-  
 ed the ancient theologists in this notion. All  
 those great men maintained that these genii  
 were very powerful, and far superior to mor-  
 tals; that they did not however partake of  
 the Deity in a pure and simple manner, but  
 were composed of a spiritual and a corporeal  
 nature, and were consequently capable of  
 pleasures and pains, passions and changes;  
 for there are virtues and vices among the ge-  
 nii as well as among men. Hence come the  
 fables of the Greeks concerning the Titans,  
 and giants, the engagements of Python against  
 Apollo, and the furies and extravagancies of  
 Bacchus, with several other fictions like those  
 of Osiris and Typhon. Hence it is likewise  
 that Homer speaks of good and evil dæmons.  
 Plato calls the first tutelary deities, because  
 they are mediators between the Deity and  
 men, carry up the prayers of mortals to hea-  
 ven, and bring us from thence the knowledge

(d) Page 358.

(e) Page 360.

and revelation of secrets and future things (f).  
 † Empedocles, continues he, says, that the evil  
 † dæmons are punished for the faults they have  
 † committed. First the sun precipitates them  
 † into the air; the air casts them into the deep  
 † sea; the sea vomits them up upon the land,  
 † and from the earth they are raised at last to  
 † heaven. Thus are they transported from  
 † one place to another, till being in the end  
 † punished and purified, they return to the  
 † place adapted to their nature.' Plutarch,  
 † after having thus given a theological explana-  
 † tion of the Egyptian allegories, gives likewise  
 † the physical explications of them; but he re-  
 † jects them all, and returns to his first doctrine.  
 (g) † Osiris is neither the sun, nor the water,  
 † nor the earth, nor the heaven; but whatever  
 † there is in nature well-disposed, well regu-  
 † lated, good and perfect, all that is the image  
 † of Osiris. Typhon is neither aridity, nor the  
 † fire, nor the sea; but whatever is hurtful,  
 † inconstant and irregular.' We must observe  
 that in this Egyptian allegory, Osiris does not  
 signify, as in other places, the first principle of  
 Deity, the Agathos of Plato, but the son of  
 Ammon, the Apollo of the Greeks, Jupiter the  
 conductor, a god inferior to the supreme Deity.

(f) Page 361.

(g) Page 376.

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It was an ancient opinion among the Pagans and Hebrews, that the Divinity had united himself to the first and most perfect production of his power.

Plutarch goes farther in another treatise, and explains to us the origin of evil; his reasoning on this occasion is equally solid and subtle, and is as follows (*b*): ‘The maker of the world, being perfectly good, formed all things at first, as far as was possible, like himself. The world at its birth received from him who made it all sorts of good things: whatever it has at present of unhappy and wicked, is an indisposition foreign to its nature. God cannot be the cause of evil, because he is sovereignly good: matter cannot be the cause of evil, because it has no active force; but evil comes from a third principle, neither so perfect as God, nor so imperfect as matter. This third being is intelligent nature, which hath within itself a source, a principle and a cause of motion.’

I have already shewn that the schools of Pythagoras and Plato asserted liberty of will. The former expresses it by that faculty of the soul, whereby it can either raise or debase itself; the other, by the wings of the soul, that is,

(*b*) Plut. de Anim. form. p. 1015.

the love of virtue and the love of pleasure, which may move different ways: Plutarch follows the same principles, and makes liberty consist in the activity of the soul, by which it is the source of its own determinations.

This opinion therefore ought not to be looked upon as modern; it is at once both natural and philosophical. The soul can always separate and reunite, recal and compare her ideas, and on this activity depends her liberty. We can always think upon other goods than those we are actually thinking of. It must be owned that the passions, by the strong sensations they excite in us, sometimes take up all the capacity of the soul, and hinder it from reflecting; they darken its discerning faculty, and hurry it on to an assent; they transform objects, and place them in a wrong light; but strong as they are, they are never invincible; it is difficult indeed, but not impossible, to surmount them; it is always in our power gradually to diminish their force, and prevent their excess. This is the warfare of man on earth, and this is the triumph of virtue. The heathens feeling this tyranny of the passions, were convinced by the light of nature alone of the necessity of a celestial power to subdue them: they always represent virtue to us as a divine energy descend-

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ing from heaven: they are continually bringing into their poems guardian deities, who inspire, enlighten and strengthen us; to shew that heroic virtues can only proceed from the gods. These were the principles upon which the wise ancients went, in their arguments against those notions of fatality, which are alike destructive of religion, morality, and society.

To return to the Egyptians. Their doctrine, according to Plutarch, supposes, 1. That the world was created without any physical or moral evil, by a Being infinitely good. 2. That several genii abusing their liberty, fell into crimes, and thereby into misery. 3. That these genii must suffer expiatory punishments till they are purified and are restored to their first state. 4. That the God Orus, the son of Isis and Osiris, and who fights with the evil principle, is a subordinate deity, like Jupiter the conductor, the son of Saturn.

Let us consult next the mythology of the orientals: the nearer we approach the first origin of nations, the more pure shall we find their theology. ‘(i) Zoroaster, says Plutarch, taught that there are two gods contrary to each other in their operations; the one the author of all the good, the other of all the

(i) De Isid. et Osirid. pag. 370.

evil in nature. The good principle he calls Oromazes, the other the dæmon Arimanius<sup>(k)</sup>. He says that the one resembles light and truth, the other darkness and ignorance. There is likewise a middle god between these two, named Mythras<sup>(l)</sup>, whom the Persians call the intercessor or mediator. The Magi add, that Oromazes is born of the purest light, and Arimanius of darkness; that they continually make war upon one another, and that Oromazes made six genii, goodness, truth, justice, wisdom, plenty and joy; and Arimanius made six others to oppose them, malice, falsehood, injustice, folly, want, and sadness. Oromazes having withdrawn himself to as great a distance from the sphere of Arimanius, as the sun is from the earth, beautified the heavens with stars and constellations. He created afterwards four and twenty other genii, and put them into an egg (by which the ancients mean the earth;) but Arimanius and his genii brake through this shining egg, and immediately evil was blended and confounded with good. But there will come a time appointed by fate, when Arimanius will be entirely destroyed and extirpated; the earth

(k) De Iudæ et Osirid pag. 370.

(l) Διὸ καὶ Μίθραν Πέρσαι τὸν μιστὶν ονομαζουσιν.

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‘will change its form, and become plain and  
 ‘even; and happy men will have only one  
 ‘and the same life, language and government.’  
 ‘Theopompus writes also, that according to  
 ‘the doctrine of the magi, these gods must  
 ‘make war for nine thousand years, the one  
 ‘destroying the other’s work, till at last (m)  
 ‘hell shall be no more; then men shall be hap-  
 ‘py, and their bodies become transparent.  
 ‘The God who made all things keeps himself  
 ‘concealed till that time; an interval not too  
 ‘long for a God, but rather like a moment of  
 ‘sleep’

We have lost the ancient books of the first  
 Persians; so that in order to judge of their my-  
 thology, we must have recourse to the Orien-  
 tal philosophers of our own time, and see if  
 there be still left among the disciples of Zoro-  
 aster, any traces of the ancient doctrine of their  
 master. The famous Dr Hyde, a divine of  
 the church of England, who had travelled in-  
 to the East, and perfectly understood the lan-  
 guage of the country, has translated the fol-  
 lowing passages out of Sharisthani, an Arabian  
 philosopher of the fifteenth century (n). ‘The

(m) *Adic*

(n) Hyde *Rel. ant. Pers. cap. 9. p. 163. et cap. 22. p. 224.*

' first magi did not look upon the two Princi-  
 ' ples as co-eternal, but believed that light was  
 ' eternal, and that darkness was produced in  
 ' time; and the origin of this evil principle  
 ' they account for in this manner: light can  
 ' produce nothing but light, and can never be  
 ' the origin of evil; how then was evil produ-  
 ' ced? light, say they, produced several be-  
 ' ings, all of them spiritual, luminous and pow-  
 ' erful; but their chief, whose name was Ah-  
 ' riman or Arimanius, had an evil thought con-  
 ' trary to the light: he doubted, and by that  
 ' doubting he became dark. From hence pro-  
 ' ceeded all evils; dissension, malice, and every  
 ' thing else of a contrary nature to the light.  
 ' These two principles made war upon one an-  
 ' other, till at last peace was concluded, upon  
 ' condition that the lower world should be in  
 ' subjection to Arimanius, for seven thousand  
 ' years: after this space of time he is to sur-  
 ' render back the world to the light.' Here  
 we see four notions that I speak of in the fore-  
 going work: 1. A state before good and evil  
 were blended and confounded together. 2. A  
 state after they were so blended and confound-  
 ed. 3. A state when evil shall be entirely de-  
 stroyed. 4. A middle-God between the good  
 and the evil Principle.

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As the doctrine of the Persian magi is a sequel of the doctrine of the Indian Brachmans, we must consult the one to put the other in a clear light. We have but few traces left of the ancient theology of the Gymnosophists, yet those, which Strabo has preserved, suppose the two states of the world, that of nature in its purity, and that of nature corrupted. When this historian has described the life and manners of the Brachmans, he adds, ‘(o) Those philosophers look upon the state of men in this life to be like that of children in their mother’s womb; death, according to their notion, being a birth to a true and a happy life. They believe, that whatever happens to mortals here does not deserve the name either of good or evil. They have many notions in common with the Greeks; and like them believe that the world had a beginning, and will have an end; and that God who made it, and governs it, is every where present to his work.’ The same author goes on in this manner: ‘Onesecritus being sent by Alexander the Great to inform himself of the life, manners and doctrine of those philosophers, found a Brachman named Calanus,

(o) Lib. 15. p. 713, 714. Ed. Lut. Par. 1620,

‘ who taught him the following principles.  
 ‘ Formerly, plenty reigned over all nature ;  
 ‘ milk, wine, honey and oil, flowed from foun-  
 ‘ tains ; but men having made an ill use of this  
 ‘ felicity, Jupiter deprived them of it, and con-  
 ‘ demned them to labour for the sustenance of  
 ‘ their lives.’

In order to form a better judgment of the doctrine of the ancient Gymnosophists, I have consulted what has been translated of the Vedam, which is the sacred book of the Modern Bramins: though its antiquity be not perhaps so great as it is affirmed to be, yet there is no denying but it contains the ancient traditions of those people, and of their philosophers. ’Tis plain by this book, ‘ (p) That the Bramins acknowledge one sole and supreme God, ‘ whom they call Vistnou; that his first and ‘ most ancient production was a secondary god, ‘ named Brama, whom the supreme God formed out of a flower that floated upon the surface of the great deep before the formation of the world ; and that Vistnou afterwards, ‘ on account of Brama’s virtue, gratitude and ‘ fidelity, gave him power to form the universe.’

(p) See Abrah. Roger, of the religion of the Bram, book II. part 1. chap. 1. & Kircher Sina Illust,

They believe moreover, ‘ (q) That souls are  
‘ eternal emanations from the divine Essence,  
‘ or at least that they were produced long be-  
‘ fore the formation of the world; that they  
‘ were originally in a state of purity, but hav-  
‘ ing sinned, were thrown down into the bodies  
‘ of men, or of beasts according to their re-  
‘ spective demerits; so that the body, where  
‘ the soul resides, is a sort of dungeon or pri-  
‘ son. Lastly, they hold, that after a certain  
‘ number of transmigrations, all souls shall be  
‘ re-united to their origin, re-admitted into  
‘ the company of the gods, and deified (r).

I should hardly have thought these traditi-  
ons authentic, or have brought myself to trust  
to the translators of the Vedam, if this doctrine  
had not been perfectly agreeable to that of Py-  
thagoras, which I gave an account of a little  
before: this philosopher taught the Greeks  
nothing but what he had learned from the  
Gymnosophists.

The discovery of these uniform and agree-  
ing sentiments in Greece, Egypt, Persia and  
the Indies, made me desirous to advance far-  
ther into the East, and to carry my researches  
as far as China. I applied myself according-

(q) Ibid. Roger, part 2. chap. 7.

(r) Abr. Kircher, Sina Illustr.

ly to such as understood the language of that country, had spent several years in it, and were well versed in the original books of that nation. And in this point particularly I have made great use of the informations I have received from a gentleman of a superior genius, who does not care to be mentioned till he has published a large work upon these matters, which will be of service to religion; and do honour to human understanding. In the mean time he has allowed me to publish the following passages, which he translated himself out of some ancient Chinese books that have been brought into Europe, and which may be seen both at Paris and at Rome; so that all who understand the language may judge of the faithfulness of the translation. The ancient commentaries on the book Yking, *i. e.* the book of Changes, continually speak of a double heaven, a primitive and a posterior. The first heaven is there described in the following manner: ‘ All things were then in a happy state, every thing was beautiful, every thing was good, all beings were perfect in their kind. In this happy age heaven and earth employed their virtues jointly to embellish nature. There was no jarring in the elements, no inclemency in the air, all things grew without



‘labour; and universal fertility reigned every  
‘where. The active and passive virtues con-  
‘spired together, without any effort or oppo-  
‘sition, to produce and perfect the universe.’  
In the books which the Chinese call King or  
Sacred, we read the following passage: ‘Whilst  
‘the first state of heaven lasted, a pure plea-  
‘sure and a perfect tranquillity reigned over all  
‘nature. There were neither labour, nor pain,  
‘nor sorrow, nor crimes. Nothing made oppo-  
‘sition to the will of man.’ The philosophers  
who stuck to these ancient traditions, and par-  
ticularly Tchouangse, say, ‘That in the state  
‘of the first heaven, man was united inwardly  
‘to the supreme reason, and that outwardly  
‘he practised all the works of justice. The  
‘heart rejoiced in truth, and there was no mix-  
‘ture of falsehood; then the four seasons of the  
‘year succeeded each other regularly without  
‘confusion. There were no impetuous winds,  
‘nor excessive rains: the sun and the moon,  
‘without ever being clouded, furnished a light  
‘purer and brighter than at present. The  
‘five planets kept on their course without any  
‘inequality. There was nothing which did  
‘harm to man, or which suffered any hurt  
‘from him. An universal amity and harmony  
‘reigned over all nature.

On the other hand, the philosopher Hoainantse speaking of the latter heaven, says, 'The pillars of heaven were broken; the earth was shaken to its very foundation; the heavens sunk lower towards the north; the sun, the moon and the stars, changed their motions; the earth fell to pieces; the waters inclosed within its bosom burst forth with violence, and overflowed it. Man rebelling against heaven, the system of the universe was quite disordered; the sun was eclipsed, the planets altered their course, and the universal harmony was disturbed.' The philosophers Wentse and Lietse, who lived long before Hoainantse, express themselves almost in the same terms. 'The universal fertility of nature, say these ancient authors, degenerated into an ugly barrenness, the plants faded, the trees withered away, disconsolate nature refused to distribute her usual bounty. All creatures declared war against one another; miseries and crimes overflowed the face of the earth. All these evils arose, says the book Liki, from man's despising the supreme monarch of the universe. He would needs dispute about truth and falsehood, and these disputes banished the eternal reason. He then fixed his looks on terrestrial objects, and

‘loved them to excess; hence arose the passions; he became gradually transformed into the objects he loved, and the celestial reason entirely abandoned him. Such was the original source of all crimes, which drew after them all manner of miseries sent by heaven for the punishment thereof.’

The same books speak of a time when every thing is to be restored to its first splendor, by the coming of a hero called Kiun-Tse, which signifies Shepherd and Prince, to whom they give likewise the names of, the most Holy, the universal Teacher, and the supreme Truth. He answers exactly to the Mythras of the Persians, the Orus, or second Osiris of the Egyptians, the Apollo or Mercury of the Greeks, and the Brama of the Indians.

These Chinese books speak likewise of the sufferings and conflicts of the Kiun-Tse, just as the Persians do of the combats of Mythras, the Egyptians of the murder of Osiris, the Tyrians of the death of Adonis, and the Greeks of the labours and painful exploits of a son of Jupiter who came down upon earth to exterminate monsters. It looks as if the source of all these allegories was an ancient tradition common to all nations, that the middle God was not to expiate and put an end to crimes but by his own

great sufferings. In speaking of the death of Adonis in the foregoing work, I have made advantage of this tradition to pave the way for what Daniel says afterwards to Cyrus concerning the suffering Messiah. I shall here give the reader an account of what I find in the religion of the Tyrians, and in the doctrine of the ancients, to authorize the new allegory which is added in the present edition. 1. The Tyrians acknowledged one supreme God, named Bel, who is the same with the Jehovah of the Hebrews (*f*). 2. They held likewise a subordinate God, whom they called Thammuz, Adon, Adonis, which signifies the Lord (*s*). 3. Adonis, Osiris, Apollo and Hercules, are the same (*t*). 4. The death of Adonis, killed by a boar, is the same with the murder of Osiris slain by Typhon, or the evil principle (*u*). 5. Solemn days were instituted by the Phœnicians to bewail the death of Adonis, and to sing praises to him as risen from the dead (*x*). 6. Some ancient and venerable writers among

(*f*) Seldenus de Diis Syris, Synt. 2. cap. 1. de Bello.

(*s*) Hesych, on the word Ἀδωνις. (*t*) See above.

(*u*) Seld. cap. ii. de Thammuz. (*x*) St. Jer. Comm.

3. upon Ezek. St. Cyril. book ii. Comm. upon Isai. Procop. upon the 18th c. of Isai. Lucian. de Dea Syr. p. 1058. Macrobius, Saturn. 1. cap. 21.

the Christians believed, that the fable of Adonis was a corruption of an old tradition concerning the suffering Messiah, and apply all the Tyrian ceremonies to our mysteries (y).

7. Adonis loved Venus, espoused her, and she became the mother of the gods (z). 8. Urania, Astarte, Venus and Proserpine, are the same goddesses (a). 9. Some think that Astarte is the morning star, Lucifer, or a fallen star (b).

10. According to the doctrine of the ancients, as well Pagan as Hebrew, spirits fell not at once, but by degrees, that is to say, from the fixed stars into the region of the planets, from the planets to the earth, and from the earth to the infernal regions (c): for which reason I have represented these three different falls of spirits by the three names of Astarte, Venus, and Proserpine. These are the foundations on which I have built the allegory of Adonis and Urania, which Amenophis rehearseth to Cyrus in the seventh book. The only liberty I have taken is to make Urania represent not the divine wisdom but fallen intelligences; as Psyche in A-

(y) Jul. Firmic. de Myst. p. 151.

(z) Sel. de Diis Syris, Synt. 2 c. 2. de Astarte, et cap. 4. de Ven. Syriac. (a) Ibid. (b) Ibid. 224. Ed. Lugd. Bat. et Suidas *ἀποπεριεργασμένη*. (c) Plutarch. de Isid. et Osirid. et Rittang. Cab. denud. de revol. anim. part 1. cap. 1.

puleius does not represent the soul of the world, but souls unfaithful to love: these kinds of metonymy are frequent in the allegorical and mythological writers.

We see then that the doctrines of the primitive perfection of nature, its fall, and its restoration by a divine hero, are equally manifested in the Mythologies of the Greeks, Egyptians, Persians, Indians and Chinese.

Let us now look into the Hebrew Mythology. By this I mean Rabbinism, or the philosophy of the Jewish doctors, and particularly of the Essenes. These philosophers asserted, according to the testimony of Josephus (*d*), 'that the literal sense of the sacred text was only an image of hidden truths. They changed, says Philo, the words (*e*), and the precepts of wisdom into allegories, after the custom of their ancestors, who had left them several books for their instruction in this science.' 'Twas the universal taste of the Orientals to make use of corporeal images to represent the properties and operations of spirits.

This symbolical style seems in a great measure authorized by the sacred writers. The prophet Daniel represents God to us under the

(*d*) Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. 2. c. 12. (*e*) Phil. de legis alleg. lib. 2. p. 53.

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image of the *Ancient of days*. The Hebrew Mythologists and Cabalists, who were a succession of the school of the Essenes, took occasion from thence to express the divine attributes by the members of the body of the *Ancient of days*. We see this allegory carried to an extravagance in the books of the Rabbins. They speak there of the dew that distilled from the brain of the *Ancient of days*, from his skull, his hair, his forehead, his eyes, and especially from his wonderful beard. These comparisons are undoubtedly absurd, and unbecoming the Majesty of God: but the cabalistical philosophers pretend to authorize them by some metaphysical notions.

The creation, according to them, is a picture of the divine perfections: all created beings are consequently images more or less perfect of the supreme Being, in proportion as they have more or less conformity with their original. Hence it follows that all creatures are in some respect like one another, and that man or the microcosm has a resemblance of the great world or macrocosm; the material world, of the intelligible world; and the intelligible world, of the archetype, which is God. Such are the principles upon which the allegorical expressions of the Cabalists are founded. If

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we strip their Mythology of this mysterious language, we shall find in it sublime notions very like those we have before admired in the heathen philosophers. I shall mention four, which are clearly enough expressed in the works of the Rabbin Irira, Moschech and Jitzack, which Rittangelius has translated in his *Cabala denudata*.

1. ' All spiritual substances, angels, human  
' souls, and even the soul of the Messiah (a),  
' were created from the beginning of the  
' world: and consequently our first parent, of  
' whom Moses speaks, represents not an indi-  
' vidual person, but all mankind governed by  
' one sole head. In that primitive state every  
' thing was glorious and perfect: there was  
' nothing in the universe that suffered, because  
' there was no such thing as crime, nature was  
' a real and a spotless image of the divine per-  
' fections.' This answers to the reign of Am-  
mon, Oromazes and Saturn. 2. ' (b) The  
' soul of the Messiah, by his perseverance in  
' the divine love, came to a strict union with  
' the pure Godhead (c), and was deservedly  
' advanced to be the King, the head, and the

(a) Vision Ezekiel, Merciv. Exp. apud Rittang. p. 225.  
tom. 3. (b) Ibid. pag. 226. (c) The Hellenistic  
Hebrews call this union of the Messiah with the divinity,  
*Hyper-a-zilutical*; which signifies super-substantial.

‘guide of all spirits.’ This notion has some resemblance of those which the Persians had of Mythras, the Egyptians of Osiris and Orus, and the Greeks of Jupiter the guide, who led souls into the super-celestial abode. 3. (d) ‘The virtue, perfection and beatitude of spirits or Zephirots (e), consisted in continually receiving and rendering back the rays which flowed from the infinite centre, that so there might be an eternal circulation of light and happiness in all spirits. Two sorts of Zephirots failed in the observance of this eternal law. The Cherubim, who were of a superior order, did not render back this light, but kept it within themselves, swelled, and became like vessels that are too full; at last they burst in pieces, and their sphere was changed into a gloomy chaos. The Ischim, who were of an inferior order, shut their eyes against this light, turning themselves towards sensible objects (f); they forgot the supreme beatitude of their nature, and took up with the enjoyment of created pleasures. They fell thereby into mortal bodies. 4. (g)

(d) Ibid. de revol. anim. part 1 cap. 1. pag. 224.

(e) A general word which signifies spirits of all kinds.

(f) Phil. Cabal. dissert. 8. cap. 13. pag. 173. tom. 3, Rittang.

(g) De revol. anim. pag. 307.

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‘Souls pass through several revolutions before they return to their primitive state; but after the coming of the Messiah, all spirits will be restored to order, and to the happiness which they enjoyed before the sin of our first parent.’ I shall now leave the reader to judge whether these four notions have not a great resemblance of those which we have found in China, Persia, Egypt and Greece, and whether I had not sufficient authority to give the four mythological pictures which are in the foregoing work.

In all these systems we see that the ancient philosophers, in order to refute the objections of the impious concerning the origin and duration of evil, adopted the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, and their final restoration. Several fathers of the church have maintained the first opinion, as the only philosophical way of explaining original sin; and Origen made use of the latter, to oppose the libertines of his time. It is far from my intention to defend these two opinions; all the use I would make of them is to shew, that reason alone furnishes arguments sufficient to confound such philosophers as refuse to believe unless they can comprehend.

It is for this reason that I make Daniel speak

a different language from Eleazer. The prophet advises Cyrus to lay aside all refined speculations, and to leave to God the care of justifying the incomprehensible steps of his providence; he plunges him again in an obscurity more wholesome and more suitable to human weakness, than all the conjectures of philosophers; he reduces what we are to believe on this subject to these four principal truths.

1. God being infinitely good, cannot produce wicked and miserable beings; and therefore the moral and physical evil; which we see in the universe, must come from the abuse that men make of their liberty. 2. Human nature is fallen from the first purity in which it was created; and this mortal life is a state of trial, in which souls are cured of their corruption, and merit a happy immortality by their virtue. 3. God united himself to human nature in order to expiate moral evil by his sacrifice: the Messiah will come at last in his glory to destroy physical evil, and renew the face of the earth. 4. These truths have been transmitted to us from age to age, from the time of the deluge till now, by an universal tradition; other nations have obscured and altered this tradition by their fables; it has been preserved in its purity no where but in the Holy Scrip-

tures, the authority of which cannot be disputed with any shadow of reason.

It is a common notion that all the footsteps of natural and revealed religion which we see in the heathen poets and philosophers, are originally owing to their having read the books of Moses; but it is impossible to answer the objections which are made against this opinion. The Jews and their books were too long concealed in a corner of the earth, to be reasonably thought the primitive light of the Gentiles: we must go farther back, even to the deluge. It is surprising that those, who are convinced of the authority of the sacred books, have not made advantage of this system to prove the truth of the Mosaic history concerning the origin of the world, the universal deluge, and the re-peopling of the earth by Noah. It is hard to account for that uniformity of sentiments which we find in the religions of all nations, otherwise than by the doctrine which I have put in the mouth of Daniel.

As the four great principles, which I have mentioned, are the foundation of our religion, my design was to do homage to it, by endeavouring to defend them against the vain cavils of audacious critics and the superstitious prejudices of weak minds. One of the chief four-



ces of modern incredulity is the false notion which impious men have entertained of Christianity. Nor indeed can we think it strange, if, while the Christian mysteries are represented in a wrong light, the principles of religion confounded with the abuses of those principles, and scholastic expositions with doctrines of faith, the miracles should pass for imposture, and the facts for fables. \* If we would engage those, who in simplicity of heart seek after truth, to listen to the proofs of revealed religion, we must begin by shewing them that its doctrines are worthy of God; and this has been my aim throughout the foregoing work. Whether I have succeeded or not, my intention was upright; and I shall not repine at the imperfection of this attempt, if I may have given occasion to any person of more learning and depth to recommend that philosophy, which teaches never to employ the imagination but as the servant of reason, to direct all improvements of the understanding to the purification of the heart, and avoiding all ostentatious parade of the sciences, to make use of them only to discover the beauties of eternal truth to those who are capable of being enamoured with them.

A  
L E T T E R

FROM

M. FRERET

(Member of the Academy of Inscriptions at PARIS.)

TO THE

A U T H O R,

Concerning the Chronology of his Work.

S I R,

THERE have perhaps been more different systems formed, to settle the history of Cyrus, and the Chronology of the kings of Babylon, than for any other part of ancient story. But these hypotheses are all so defective, and so ill connected with contemporary events, that we are stopped almost at every step, by the contradictions and inconsistencies we meet with in them. This every man's experience shews him to be true, who reads the writings of Scaliger,

Petau, Usher, Marsham, the bishop of Meaux and Prideaux.

But in your work you have wisely avoided these difficulties, and have hit upon the best method of reconciling the contradictory accounts which Herodotus, Ctesias, Xenophon, and other ancient writers, give us of Cyrus. You have preserved this prince's war with his grandfather Astyages; a war which the ancients allow to be certain, and which Xenophon himself acknowledges in his retreat of the ten thousand; he suppressed this fact in his *Cyropædia*, only to avoid throwing a blemish on Cyrus's character, by a war which he thought contrary to natural duty: Prideaux has likewise thought fit to suppress it. Marsham has invented a mere romance, and supposes, that there were two different kingdoms of the Medes, which were at the same time governed by two Astyages's, one the grandfather, and the other the enemy of Cyrus. The method you have taken is more simple, and more agreeable to ancient story; you have paved the way for this war, and conducted it in such a manner, that it does in no wise stain the character of your hero.

The omission of so considerable an event led Xenophon into two anachronisms, in order to

find employment for Cyrus in his younger years: this author antedates the taking of Sardis 25 years, and that of Babylon, 28. As this historian had nothing in view but military virtues and the qualities of a true patriot, whereby to form his hero, his scheme did not furnish him with the same materials to fill up Cyrus's youth, as your's does. He had no thoughts of instilling into his mind such principles as would most effectually secure him from the dangers which beset the virtue of princes, or of guarding him before hand against the corruption of false politics and false philosophy, which are, in their consequences, equally fatal to society. Xenophon, having been educated in Greece, was acquainted only with the kingdoms of Sparta and Macedon, whose Kings were, properly speaking, nothing more than the chief persons in their state; and the magistrates were rather their colleagues than their ministers. He had no notion of the abuses of despotic power, and therefore could have no thoughts of preventing them. Whereas your design being to form a king, rather than a conqueror, a prince better qualified to make his people happy under his government, than to force them to submit to his laws; you are thereby enabled to give Cyrus full employment in his youth by making

him travel, and that very consistently with true chronolgy.

Cyrus died the 218th year of Nabonassar, and 530 years before the Christian Aera, which I shall not lose time in proving, because acknowledged by all chronologers. This prince was then 70 years of age, according to Dinon, the author of a celebrated history of Persia (*a*). He was therefore born in the 148th year of Nabonassar, 600, or 599 years before Christ. He had reigned, according to the astronomical canon, nine years at Babylon. This city was therefore taken in the 61st year of his age, the 209th of Nabonassar, and the 539 before Christ.

Sardis was taken, according to Socrates in Diogenes Laertius (*b*), and according to Solinus, (*c*) in the fourth year of the 58th Olympiad; but according to Eusebius, in the first year of that Olympiad; and consequently either in the 545th or 548th year before Christ, and the 52d or 55th year of Cyrus's life. He reigned 30 years over the Medes and Persians, according to Herodotus and Ctesias, and he was 40 years old according Dinon, when he mounted the throne; which fixes the beginning of his reign to the 188th year of Nabonassar, the first year

(*a*) Cic. de Divin. lib. 2.    (*b*) Diog. Laer. lib. 1. Peri-  
and.

(*c*) Chap. viii.

of the 55th Olympiad, and the 560th year before Christ. (*d*) Eusebius tells us, that all chronologists agreed in placing the beginning of Cyrus's reign over the Medes and Persians in this year of the 55th Olympiad. But historians have neither told us how many years Cyrus's war with the Medes lasted, nor any particulars of what happened in the first forty years of his life: you are therefore at full liberty to fill up this space with whatever you judge most proper to your design; and your chronology is not only agreeable to that of the Greeks and Persians, but likewise to that of the Babylonians.

Xenophon indeed has changed all this chronology: according to him Cyrus went to the court of Media at 12 years, stayed there 4 years, returned in his 16th year; entered into the class of the *Ἐφηβοί* or young-men in his 17th, and continued in it 10 years. To which he adds, that Astyages died in this interval, but this is not true; for that prince reigned till he was conquered by Cyrus in the year 560, and did not die till some years after: you have therefore done well in not following Xenophon. According to him, Cyrus entered Media at the head of 30,000 men when he was 28 years of

(*d*) Praepar. Evang. lib. x.



age; subdued the Armenians at 29; marched against the Lydians, and took Sardis at 30; and made himself master of Babylon at 33, about the year 567. This is the 179th year of Nabonassar, and the 36th of Nabuchodonosor, who reigned 7 years after it; these 7 years added to the 21 years of the four kings who reigned in Babylon after him, make the 28 years of the anachronism above-mentioned. The rest of Xenophon's chronology is of no importance to your work. He does not determine the time of the death either of Mandana, or Cambyfes, and you are therefore entirely at liberty to place these events as will best suit with your plan.

The city of Tyre was not taken till the 19th year of Nabuchodonosor, after a thirteen years siege, which began the seventh of that prince's reign, according to the Phoenician annals which Josephus had read. In the year Jerusalem was taken, which was the 18th year of Nabuchodonosor, the prophet Ezekiel threatens Tyre with approaching ruin; it therefore was not taken at that time; Cyrus was then 15th years of age; now, as his travels are all placed between the 28th and 32d year of his age, and as he does not go to Tyre till after his travels in Greece, you are guilty of no anachronism in this particular; moreover, what you relate

of the history of this city sufficiently fills up the 15 or 16 years from the time of its being conquered by the Babylonians.

We have no where any express passage whereby to fix the time of Nabuchodonosor's madness; that he was mad is certain from Daniel, and it is very probable it happened towards the end of his life; my reasons for it are these. Jehoiachin was carried into captivity in the 8th year of Nabuchodonosor's reign over Judea, and the 4th of his reign in Babylon; that is, the 148th year of Nabonassar, 600 years before Christ, and the year Cyrus was born. We are told in Jeremiah (*e*), and in the second book of Kings (*f*) that in the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, Evilmerodach ascended the throne of Babylon, took Jehoiachin out of prison, admitted him to his own table, and heaped many honours upon him; this was the 184th year of Nabonassar, the 564th before Christ, and the 37th of Cyrus's age; at which time Nabuchodonosor was yet alive, since he did not die till the 186th of Nabonassar, 562 years before Christ, and the 39th of Cyrus; Evilmerodach therefore did not only mount the throne in his father's life-time, but he governed without consulting him, and with so little depen-

(*e*) Chap. iii. ver. 31.

(*f*) Chap. xxv. ver. 27.

dence upon him, as not to fear provoking him by taking quite different measures from his, and heaping honours on a prince, whom his father had all along kept in fetters. Berosus makes the prince, whom he calls Evilmerodach, to have reigned 10 years, the astronomical canon allows him but two, and calls him Ilovarodam; the Scripture places him upon the throne three years before the death of his father.

All these difficulties will vanish if we suppose, that Nabuchodonosor's madness began eight years before his death, and that his son Evilmerodach was from that time looked upon as king, placed himself at the head of affairs, and governed the empire with his father's ministers; these eight years, joined with the two he reigned alone after his father's death, make up the ten years of Berosus; the holy scriptures begin his reign later, doubtless from the time that he removed the ministers who made him uneasy, which did not happen till the third year before the death of Nabuchodonosor. This prince's madness continued but seven years; after that time he recovered his senses, re-assumed the government, and published an edict in favour of the Jews, which is related in Daniel: his name had all along been made use of in the public acts, and for this reason the

astronomical canon makes his son Illovarodam to have reigned but two years; this canon was drawn up from the public acts. Nebuchodonosor's madness must have produced great revolutions in the court of Babylon, and we may form an idea of them from what passed in the court of France during that of Charles VI. when the management of affairs was one while lodged in the hands of the queen, sometimes in those of his children, and at other-times in those of the great Lords and Princes of the blood. Upon this supposition, which is both easy and necessary, Nabuchodonosor's madness will have happened in the 179th year of Nabonassar, the 569th before Christ, and the 32d of Cyrus's age; this prince must have been informed of that event, for it was of great importance to him to know it; it is not to be doubted but it had its influence in the war of the Medes and Persians. The kings of Babylon were allied to those of the Medes: Nabuchodonosor had married a daughter of Astyages; the Babylonians would have taken some part in this war, had it not been for the weakness of their government, occasioned by the king's madness, and for the divisions which prevailed at court among the different parties that contended for the direction of affairs. Nay, it is

probable that queen Amytis endeavoured to reconcile the Medes and Persians; because, independently of the ties of blood, it was against her interest to have either of those nations subdue the other. The sight of so famous a conqueror reduced to so deplorable a condition, must have been a very proper spectacle for the instruction of Cyrus, and you had great reason not to neglect it. He returned from his travels, according to your chronology, about the 32d year of his age, after Nabuchodonosor's madness had already seized him: Cyrus spent near seven years in Persia, governing under his father; during which time all the intrigues between Cyaxares and Soranes were carried on, Cambyfes made war with the Medes, and Astyages died; after which Cyrus went to Babylon, to negotiate affairs with Amytis a little before Nabuchodonosor's madness left him; this time was judiciously chosen to make the sight more affecting and instructive.

Your chronology, with regard to political affairs, and the revolutions which happened in Cyrus's time, is therefore perfectly agreeable to that of the Greeks, Babylonians and Hebrews; let us now enquire, whether the great men whom you make Cyrus to have seen in his travels were his contemporaries; you may indeed

be allowed a greater liberty in this case than in the former. You know how the ancients contradict one another with regard to the time when Zoroaster lived; which doubtless proceeds from hence, that the name of Zoroaster was given to all those who, at different times, reformed the religion of the Magi. The last of these was the most famous, and is the only one who is known by that name, or by the name of Zardouscht in the East. Prideaux makes him contemporary with Cambyfes and Darius the son of Hyftafpes, but it is very probable he lived some time before them. The Orientals, as may be seen in Dr. Hyde's works, make him to have lived under Gustafpes or Hyftafpes, the father of Darab, who is the first Darius according to the Greeks. This Gustafpes was older than Cyrus, and may have been the same person whom you make his governor. Whence it necessarily follows, that the reformation of the religion of the Magi must have been made during his reign, and that Zoroaster lived at that time. The reformation made by Darius supposes that the Magi had assumed to themselves very great authority, which he took away from them. He likewise corrupted the purity of Zoroaster's religion by a mixture of foreign idolatry. In his reign the worship



of Anaitis was first brought into Persia, contrary to the hypothesis of Dr. Prideaux. Your scheme is more agreeable to the course of the history, and to those facts which are common to the Greek, Persian and Arabian writers.

Cyrus may have married Cassandana at 18 years of age, and have lived with her nine or ten years; so that he may have travelled into Egypt about the 29th year of his age. Your chronology agrees exactly with the age of Amasis. All chronologists concur in fixing the end of his reign to the year before Cambyse's expedition, that is, about the 525th year before Christ, and the 63d Olympiad. Herodotus makes his reign to have lasted 44 years; and consequently places the beginning of it in the 569th year before Christ, and the 52d Olympiad, and about the 30th year of Cyrus. Diodorus indeed, who makes Amasis to have reigned 55 years, supposes that he ascended the throne in the 579th or 580th year before Christ, and the 20th year of Cyrus's age: but these two opinions are easily reconciled. Herodotus begins Amasis's reign at the end of the revolution which placed him on the throne, and Diodorus at the beginning of his revolt.

Apries must have lived but a little time after the taking of Jerusalem, since the prophet

Jeremiah (*a*) foretells his death under the name of Pharaoh Hophra, as what was soon to happen. Jerusalem was taken in the year 589 before Christ, and the 63d before Amasis's death; which shew that the troubles in Egypt were already begun. According to your system Amasis governed all Egypt in tranquillity when Cyrus went thither, and Apries had already been dead several years (*b*); which is agreeable both to sacred and profane history, Cyrus being between 28 and 30 years of age when he travelled.

The Greek chronology indeed will not be so easily reconciled to yours, but the anachronism will not exceed 12 or 14 years. Chilo was, according to Hermippus, as quoted by Diogenes Laertius (*c*), advanced in age at the time of the 52d Olympiad. This Olympiad began in the 573d year before Christ, and ended in the 570th Olympiad, which was the 30th of Cyrus. This was before his Ephorate, which Pamphyla places in the 56th Olympiad, but this passage is manifestly corrupted. The ano-

(*a*) Chap. xliv. the last verse.

(*b*) In this new edition the Author has taken the liberty to vary a little from this chronology. Apries is yet living when Cyrus goes into Egypt.

(*c*) Diog. Laert, lib, 1.

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Anonymous author of the chronology of the Olympiads fixes the time of the magistracy of Chilo to that of the Archonship of Euthydemes at Athens, that is, to the 81st year before Xerxes's passage into Asia, according to the chronology (*d*) of the Arundelian marbles. This was the 561st year before Christ, and the 38th of Cyrus, which agrees perfectly well with your chronology; for Cyrus might have seen Chilo eight years before, as he went to Sparta, and when he was thirty years of age.

Periander died, according to Socrates (*e*), at the end of the 48th Olympiad, the 585th year before Christ, and the 16th of Cyrus. The ancients tell us he had reigned 40 years, and began to flourish about the 38th Olympiad. You postpone his death 12 or 14 years; but as you do this only to make Cyrus a witness of his desperate death, the anachronism is a beauty, and is otherwise of little importance.

Pisistratus's reign over the Athenians did not begin till 560 years before Christ, 71 before the battle of Marathon, according to Thucydides (*f*), and 100 before the tyranny of the 400 at

(*d*) Marm. Oxon. Chronol. Attic. Epoch. 42.

(*e*) Diog. Laert. lib. 1.

(*f*) Lib. 6. p. 449, 452, et lib. 8. p. 601, Arist. Pol. lib. 6. pag. 12.

Athens. Cyrus was then 40 years old, so that your anachronism here is only of 9 or 10 years. And with regard to Solon, you are guilty of no anachronism at all. His Archonship, and his reformation of the government of Athens, were in the year 597 before Christ, and the 3d year of the 46th Olympiad (*g*). He spent a considerable time in travelling, and did not return to Athens till he was advanced in years, which would not suffer him to be concerned in public affairs any more. He died at the age of 80 years, in the second year of Pisistratus's reign, according to Phanias of Etesa, and in the 41st year of Cyrus; who might therefore have conversed with him 9 or 10 years before.

You ought likewise to give yourself as little concern about the bringing Pythagoras and Cyrus together. Dionysius Halicarnasseus tells us (*h*), that the former went into Italy about the 50th Olympiad, that is, about the 577th year before Christ. He makes use of the word *κατα*, (about) which shews that this date need not be strictly taken. And indeed Diogenes Laertius shews us, that he flourished about the 60th Olympiad, that is, about 40 years after;

(*g*) Diog. Laert. and Plut. life of Solon.

(*h*) D. Hal. lib. 12.

which if we understand of the time of his death, which was at the age of 80, he will then have been 50 years old when he went into Italy, and he will appear to have been born about the 520 year before Christ. If Pythagoras the philosopher be the same with him who offered to fight at the Olympic games among the children, and upon being rejected desired to be received among the men, and gained the prize in the 48th Olympiad; he was 16 or 17 in the year 585 before Christ, and was scarce older than Cyrus. This is the opinion of Dr. Bentley, who is able to defend himself against all the objections which have been made to him. But without entering into this dispute, it is sufficient for your vindication, that Pythagoras was returned from his travels and capable of conferring with Cyrus when this prince went into Greece, in the year 565 before Christ; which cannot be denied in any of the different systems which the learned have formed concerning the time of Pythagoras's life.

You have likewise sufficient foundation for bringing him into a dispute with Anaximander. This philosopher must have seen Pythagoras though he was older than he, being, according to Apollodorus in Diogenes Laertius, 64 years of age in the 2d year of the 48th O-

lympiad, that is, in the year 565 before Christ. And it is likewise a beauty in your work to see the young Pythagoras triumphing over the sophistry of the Materialist. It is not to be doubted but the Milesian philosopher was the first inventor of the doctrine of the Atomists; as Aristotle (*i*), Cicero (*k*), Plutarch (*l*), and Simplicius (*m*) testify. The *Τὸ Ἀπείρον* of Anaximander was an infinite matter: his doctrine is the same with that of Spinoza.

You see, Sir, that complaisance had no part in my approbation of the chronology of your book; you were not obliged to adhere so scrupulously to truth, you might have contented yourself with probability; the nature of your work did not require more: nevertheless this exactness will, I am persuaded, give it new beauties in the opinion of those who are versed in ancient history. Exactness is not incompatible with a fine imagination; and it degenerates into dryness only when a writer is of a cold and heavy genius.

I am, &c.

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(*i*) Phys. lib. 1. cap. 4.

(*k*) De Nat. Deor. lib. 1.

(*l*) Placit. Phil. lib. 1. c. 3.

(*m*) Comm. in Epict.

The END.





